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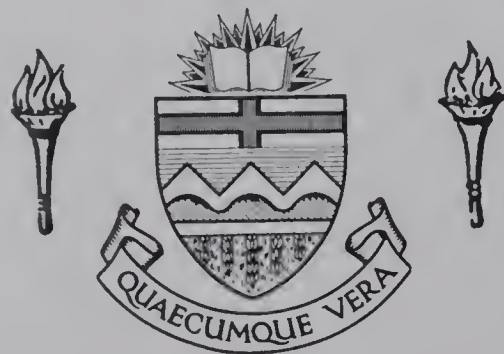
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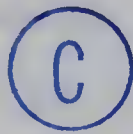




THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE SENSITIVITY OF SPEAKERS OF STANDARD ENGLISH  
TO USAGE IN SPEECH AND WRITING

by



JOHN RONALD CAMERON

A THESIS

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE SENSITIVITY OF SPEAKERS OF STANDARD ENGLISH TO USAGE IN SPEECH AND WRITING, submitted by John Ronald Cameron in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



## ABSTRACT

The study was an investigation of the reaction of speakers of Standard English to certain items of disputed usage. It attempted to gather empirical evidence which would assist teachers in their approach to usage problems in the schools, and which would contribute to a more valid design for future surveys of usage.

Forty items of disputed usage, commonly called "errors" in public school textbooks, were presented to three groups of fifteen judges each. The respective groups were composed of businessmen, university faculty, and English teachers in Edmonton, Alberta. The usage items were embedded in each of three different media of presentation : speech, business letters, and isolated sentences. The judges were asked to register objections to any items of usage which they considered inappropriate.

The statistical data were subjected to the Chi-square test for significance of differences, and to the Spearman-rho test of rank-order correlation.

The results of the investigation showed that speakers of Standard English are not equally sensitive to usage errors in different contexts. There was a significant rise in sensitivity to errors with changes in the media of presentation from speech to letters to isolated sentences. The forty-five judges as a group objected to twice as many items in







letters as they did in speech, and to four times as many in isolated sentences as in speech. For the business and university groups alone, the ratio was 1 : 4 : 8.

The individual groups also exhibited different degrees of sensitivity to the usage errors. Businessmen registered the lowest number of total objections (21.2%), followed by the university group (29.3%) and the English teachers (46.0%). In the majority of cases, the English teachers were far more critical of the usage errors than were the rest of the judges.

Finally, the investigation demonstrated that there is a significant degree of consensus among different groups of speakers of Standard English about the standing of individual usages on a general scale of respectability. There was a significant rank-order correlation between the usages identified as errors (a) in spite of changes in the groups of judges, and (b) in spite of changes in the media of presentation.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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To my children I should apologize for the frequently choleric humor of their student-father. To my wife I must resist a lyrical dedication for her constant cheerfulness and confidence, and instead offer the hope that our future in academe will be more fruitful and congenial than it has sometimes been in the past.





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## CHAPTER I

### BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

#### I INTRODUCTION

A major goal of the English program in the public schools is to teach students how to be clear, concise, and emphatic in their use of language in speech and writing.<sup>1</sup> The student should be trained to organize his materials, to think rationally, to argue convincingly, to appeal to the imagination, and to adjust his tone to suit the audience and the occasion. The achievement of such objectives requires a sequential program in English from the earliest years, well-trained teachers, textbooks based on scientific linguistic principles, and an examination system which is not at odds with such goals. Under the pressure of these requirements, both curriculum content and teacher education in the field of English are currently being closely scrutinized.<sup>2</sup> It is the purpose of the present study

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<sup>1</sup> A representative statement of the aims of English studies is that in George Winchester Stone, Jr., ed., Issues, Problems, and Approaches in the Teaching of English (New York : Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1961), pp. 138-39.

<sup>2</sup> The widespread interest in English education is reflected in the many recent publications of the National Council of Teachers of English, notably The English Language Arts in the Secondary School (1956), The National Interest and the Teaching of English (1961), The Education of Teachers of English (1963), Research in Written Composition (1963), A Common Purpose (1965).





to investigate how one area of English studies might be made more challenging and productive.

The making of a competent writer and speaker is a complex process. It is important that those who plan and teach the curriculum in English establish clear-cut priorities among the various components of the language program. If they do not, there is a danger that the most mechanical and easily taught elements will receive disproportionate attention. A specific example is the teaching of usage, which might be defined as a description of how native speakers of the language employ certain words and expressions in various social contexts.

At least five beliefs have been implicit in the traditional teaching of usage in the public schools:<sup>1</sup>

1) The English language is governed by certain unchanging a priori laws, which dictate the standards of correct English usage.

2) These laws have been discovered through the application to English of logic, analogy (usually with Latin), etymology, and authoritative personal opinion.<sup>2</sup>

3) These laws are contained in grammar books and in hand-books of usage.

4) With few exceptions, any deviation from the usage dictated by these laws is bad English, and any widespread deviance is a symptom of decay in the language.

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<sup>1</sup> Representative statements are found in Hans P. Guth, English Today & Tomorrow (Englewood Cliffs : Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp. 13-15; and James Sledd, A Short Introduction to English Grammar (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1959), pp. 2-4.

<sup>2</sup> Karl W. Dykema, "Where Our Grammar Came From," College English (April 1961), p.458.





5) One of the major responsibilities of the public school program in English is to ensure that students learn these rules of usage and employ them in their daily speech and writing.

This approach to language became dominant in the thinking of educated men during the eighteenth century. Grammarians of the time attempted in their many influential books to purify and codify the language, which in their eyes was rapidly becoming corrupt. The grammars of Bishop Robert Lowth (1762), James Buchanan (1762), William Ward (1765), and Lindley Murray (1795) are best known. The few of their contemporaries, such as Joseph Priestley (1761), who insisted on a descriptive basis for statements about usage received little attention.<sup>1</sup>

The prescriptive attitude toward usage persisted throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. During this period the young science of linguistics was pursued largely by historical and comparative philologists, and it was not until the inception of work on the Oxford English Dictionary<sup>2</sup> that the first serious challenge to the prescriptive theories was made by the exponents of a descriptive approach to usage. The development of this linguistic theory of usage, and the research which supported it, are described in Chapter II.

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<sup>1</sup> The best book on the eighteenth-century backgrounds is still Sterling A. Leonard, The Doctrine of Correctness in English 1700-1800 (Madison : University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, No. 25, 1929). Also useful is George H. McKnight, Modern English in the Making (New York : Appleton, 1928).

<sup>2</sup> James A. Murray, ed., A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1928).



Among the major proposals of the advocates of descriptive linguistics are the following:<sup>1</sup>

1) English instruction should pay close attention to the spoken language.

2) English instruction should distinguish at all times the various cultural levels and functional varieties of usage employed by speakers of the language.

3) Statements about the status of any given item of usage should be realistic, that is, descriptive of the actual practice of educated people in the contemporary society, as determined by empirical investigation.

The principle of usage states that there are no absolute standards of correctness in language independent of time, place, and circumstance, and that the sole standard for judgment is the appropriateness of an utterance at the time it is used. Perhaps Pooley's definition is best known:

Good English is that form of speech which is appropriate to the purpose of the speaker, true to the language as it is, and comfortable to speaker and listener. It is the product of custom, neither cramped by rule nor freed from all restraint; it is never fixed, but changes with the organic life of the language.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A general statement of descriptive theory is found in Charles Carpenter Fries, The Structure of English (New York : Harcourt, Brace, 1952), pp. 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> Robert C. Pooley, Teaching English Usage (New York : Appleton-Century, 1946), p.14.







Linguists generally distinguish at least three broad categories of English : Formal English, Standard English, and Nonstandard English.<sup>1</sup> Standard English is the informal speech and writing of influential, educated people who are prominent in the general affairs of the country.<sup>2</sup> Educators who have adopted the outlook of linguistic science maintain that it is on Standard English that the language curriculum in the public schools should focus.

The descriptive theory of usage, however, has faced much resistance in recent years, culminating in the strong protest in the daily and periodical press which greeted the publication of Webster's Third New International Dictionary in 1961:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The number of categories and the terminology used by various linguists of course varies. In his Writer's Guide Perrin subdivides Standard English into Formal, General, and Informal; the Corbin-Perrin-Buxton Guide to Modern English, used in Alberta schools, speaks of Formal and Informal Standard, plus Nonstandard. The Leonard study used Literary-Colloquial-Illiterate, while Marckwardt was forced to use six categories to distinguish between British and American usage. In a well-known article in College English (October 1948) John Kenyon objected to the distinction between Formal English and Standard English : he preferred to speak in terms of several "functional varieties" of Standard English, of which Formal English would be one.

<sup>2</sup> This definition is discussed in more detail on pages 8 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Philip Babcock Gove, ed., Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language (Springfield, Mass.: G & C Merriam Company, 1961).



Before the appearance of Webster's Third New International Dictionary, many English teachers would have dismissed the doctrine of usage as pretty well established and a little old hat....The indignant and sometimes rabid reception of the new dictionary with cries of "lexicographical irresponsibility," "calamity," and even "sabotage," shows plainly enough that the question of usage is still unsettled, still arguable.<sup>1</sup>

The argument has since abated, however, and it seems clear that more widespread acceptance of the descriptive theory of usage is inevitable. Webster's III, of course, will continue to be influential; the National Council of Teachers of English has long ago officially adopted the approach of modern linguistics, and the large majority of reputable linguists in Great Britain and the United States have rejected the Appeal to Authority.<sup>2</sup> What is needed in the next decade is extensive research into the facts of language usage among all classes of English-speaking North Americans, the writing of practical textbooks for the public schools, and the training or retraining of English teachers in the development and principles of the language.

## II THE PROBLEM

Lexicographers, linguistic geographers, and structural grammarians have done much valuable work in this century in describing the language habits of English-speaking North Americans.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Norman, "This Most Cruel Usage," College English (January 1965), p.276.

<sup>2</sup> R.J. Baker, "The Linguistic Theory of Usage," Journal of the Canadian Linguistic Association (Spring, 1961), p.209.

<sup>3</sup> Their contributions are surveyed in Chapter II.





Much remains to be done, however, to ensure that such descriptions continue to be current, complete, and valid. The English educator, in particular, needs empirical evidence if he is to argue with conviction for curricular and pedagogical reforms in the English language program in the public schools. The prescriptivist who bases his judgments on logic or personal authority can avoid the problems involved in gathering empirical evidence, but the descriptivist may not. Said Fries,

Those who hold this scientific point of view insist, therefore, that the first step in fulfilling the obligation of the schools in the matter of dealing with the English language is to record, realistically and completely as possible, the facts of this usage.<sup>1</sup>

McDavid insisted that "Perhaps most in demand is an adequate and continually revised treatment of usage....We have to devise techniques of getting data."<sup>2</sup> Almost twenty years ago Hill summed up the problem:

We all know what linguists have been saying for more than a generation, backed by evidence which no one tries to refute, namely, that correctness is to be judged by usage, not by a priori standards. Yet somehow the handbooks continue to be turned out, with the same old rules, no matter how often they have been shown to be unreal. We would all agree, I believe, that if our prescriptive rules were realistic and based on investigation, the teaching of composition would be more vital and valuable, since it could then concern itself with matters of clarity and aesthetics, which are its real business....We can do a great deal to bring about such a happy state of affairs if throughout the country, department by department, we spend some of our time in testing rules of correctness by usage rather than in collecting the dicta of handbooks.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Carpenter Fries, American English Grammar (New York : Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1940), p.51.

<sup>2</sup> Raven McDavid, "American English," College English (February 1964), p.336.

<sup>3</sup> Archibald A. Hill, "A Survey of Accomplishments and Trends in Research in Present-Day English," American Speech (April 1949), p.86.





The problem of gathering data about usage was investigated by the present study in terms of three questions. The first question involves the selection of a sample of speakers of Standard English to act as informants in a survey of usage. The second question involves the design of a survey instrument which will obtain an accurate description of the informants' language habits and attitudes. The third question involves techniques for assessing the data supplied by such a survey. Each of these questions is discussed in turn in the sections which follow.

Question 1 : How does the investigator of usage identify the people in the society whose language habits set the standard?

Scholarly and professional writers about language have for the most part been rather nebulous in their attempts to circumscribe the population designated by the expression, "speakers of Standard English." In a more aristocratic age, the language of the court provided a convenient model, which Dryden, for instance, accepted in conformity with French practice.<sup>1</sup> In his Philosophy of Rhetoric (1776) Campbell rejected the courtly standard : "The British court is commonly too fluctuating an object. Usage in language requires firmer ground to stand upon." Campbell preferred "authors of reputation."<sup>2</sup> In the twentieth century, most commentators have been careful to avoid a purely written standard, since it would supply few guides to the spoken language. The adjectives most commonly

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<sup>1</sup> McKnight, op. cit., p.416.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



applied to speakers of Standard English have been "educated," "cultivated and well-bred," "respectable," and "influential." There has been a reluctance to define what precisely is meant by these terms. Krapp spoke of the "average intelligent population of the country";<sup>1</sup> Fries referred to "that large group who are carrying on the affairs of English-speaking people";<sup>2</sup> Bonney nominated "most of middle-class America."<sup>3</sup> Macdonald and Follett, two of the chief spokesmen for the prescriptive school, offered "those persons with a strong consciousness of language," "those who attend on language,"<sup>4</sup> and "what people who think and care about words believe good usage to be."<sup>5</sup> Philip Gove, editor of Webster's III, was more specific:

Admittedly the use of educated in these definitions presents a problem of latitude....The educated are not limited in application to college graduates who have majored in the humanities. Broadly it should include

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<sup>1</sup> George Philip Krapp, Modern English (New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), p.294.

<sup>2</sup> Charles C. Fries, "Usage Levels and Dialect Distribution," American College Dictionary, in Leonard F. Dean and Kenneth G. Wilson, Essays on Language and Usage (New York : Oxford University Press, 1963), p.277.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Bonney, "An English Teacher Answers Mario Pei," Saturday Review (September 15, 1962), p.60.

<sup>4</sup> Dwight Macdonald, Against the American Grain (New York: Vintage, 1965), p.325.

<sup>5</sup> Wilson Follett, Modern American Usage (New York : Hill & Wang, 1966), p.6.





those who have graduated from high school and got out of high school what a high school is intended to give. Obviously the educated include college graduates but are not restricted to them.<sup>1</sup>

The few surveys that have been made of opinion on specific items of disputed usage have relied heavily on informants involved in either teaching or writing the language as a profession. Little attention has been paid to the large mass of "cultivated," "educated," "influential" people in North America whose occupations have nothing to do with teaching or writing English, and whose formal association with English instruction ended years ago. More serious consideration should be given to the linguistic habits and attitudes of such non-specialists; measured against most of the qualifications suggested by the authorities mentioned above, their speech and writing should qualify as Standard English.

No major survey of usage should be undertaken until more evidence has been gathered on which to base sampling procedures. It is vital that the results of a survey will be a reflection of the linguistic habits and attitudes of a representative cross-section of the various commercial, professional, and academic groups which compose the linguistic set categorized as "speakers of Standard English." It is particularly important to discover whether teachers of English are reliable guides to usage, and whether they are representative of speakers of Standard English in the rest of the academic world and in the executive class in business and government.

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<sup>1</sup> Philip P. Gove, "Usage in the Dictionary," College English (January 1966), p.285.





Question 2 : Once the investigator has selected his sample of informants, how does he obtain a valid description of how these people use and react to language in speech and writing from day to day?

A problem that remains most vexing to descriptive linguists is the design of a valid and reliable empirical investigation into the speaking and writing practices of people whose main dialect might be assumed to be Standard English. A person's linguistic performance may be assessed from at least three points of view : a) His use of language, b) His deliberate opinion about language, and c) His spontaneous reaction to language.

If the investigator wishes to discover how people use language he must be prepared to tape-record an extensive sample of conversation in a wide variety of contexts, and to study a large corpus of written words. These procedures supply a random sample of language, and are not practical if all that is desired is to determine the status of a limited number of disputed items.

To secure opinion about language, the common practice has been to draw up a list of disputed usage, put them into a series of individual sentences, and ask a group of judges to classify the items according to some scale of acceptability. Unfortunately, there appears to be no way to guarantee that the judges do not answer on the basis of what they think they should say rather than on the basis of what they actually do say, or on the basis of what they actually observe to be general educated practice.



Furthermore, placing each item in a short sentence tends to emphasize it; whether the judges would object to or even notice the item in the contexts of speech or longer written material is not discovered by such a survey, and no formal attempt has been made to determine whether the medium of communication makes any significant difference in a subject's reaction to language usage.

This third method of assessment of linguistic performance, the testing of a judge's spontaneous reaction to language in an extended piece of meaningful speech or prose, is more subtle. It is easy enough to compile a list of sentences, each containing a separate disputed item (which may or may not be underlined), and send it to several hundred judges. The question would still remain: How many of the items rejected or severely restricted when seen in separate sentences would be rejected or even noticed when met in a flow of meaningful prose, which is the much more usual medium of communication?

Finally, there is the ancillary problem of the dichotomy between speech and writing. It is apparent that most people are more sensitive to deviant usage in writing than in speech, but exactly how much more sensitive has not been determined. Opinion and guesswork are virtually all that linguists and teachers have on which to base their statements about what is generally appropriate only in speech.

Question 3 : When presented with a series of disputed usage items, do informants tend to agree on the rank of each item on a scale of acceptability (a) in spite of differences in the





occupational and academic backgrounds of the informants, and  
(b) in spite of changes in the media of presentation from  
speech to writing?

Within the set of speakers of Standard English there are many sub-sets distinguishable by commercial, professional, and educational differences. If it could be demonstrated that different sub-sets of informants agree on the relative acceptability of a usage, and that such agreement is maintained in both speech and writing, then the educator would be provided with powerful evidence for establishing teaching priorities among the various items of usage.

### III DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

In an attempt to answer in part the three questions discussed above, the investigator isolated three clearly distinguishable sub-sets of speakers of Standard English from the business and academic population of Edmonton, Alberta. These informants were presented with forty commonly disputed items of usage, embedded in the three different media of speech, letters, and isolated sentences. They were asked to register an objection to any usage that they considered inappropriate.

The differences in reaction to usage resulting from changes in the groups and in the media were subjected to statistical analysis. The design of the study and the hypotheses tested are contained in Chapter III, which is preceded by a review of research in the field of usage during the past century.





Chapters IV, V, and VI report the results of the investigation, and Chapter VII contains a summary, conclusions, and suggestions for further research.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter will be limited to a review of literature that describes on the basis of evidence how speakers of Standard English use and react to specific items of usage. It will also mention the more general publications that have had a major bearing on the development of the scientific principles of usage.

There are five major sources of authoritative information about usage : dictionaries, surveys of opinion, handbooks, grammars, and scholarly articles. These sources are not completely independent, of course; handbooks, for instance, rely heavily for information on all of the other sources. They are, however, clearly distinguishable insofar as scope, emphasis, and intent are concerned. This chapter will review the most significant works of the past century in each of the first four categories, and will summarize the contributions as a whole of scholarly articles, which are too numerous to receive individual treatment here.

#### Pre-Twentieth Century

One of the earliest and most respected of the modern handbooks was Modern English, published by Fitzedward Hall in 1873 after a long and patient observation of the facts of written





usage in England and America.<sup>1</sup> Hall's rejection of the methods of the traditionally arbitrary grammarian, and his insistence that every judgment about usage must be supported by strong historical evidence, was a stimulus and example to the editors of the Oxford English Dictionary, which began publication in 1888. That dictionary's debt to Hall was acknowledged by editor James A. Murray in his prefatory remarks.

As the first comprehensive and objective description of the English lexicon, the OED is of immense interest and value to all students of the language. As a guide to contemporary usage, however, it must be approached cautiously, particularly by anyone in North America; it has not been revised since its completion in 1928, and its focus is largely on written British English.

The OED was relied upon heavily by the great English grammarian Henry Sweet, who produced A New English Grammar: Logical and Historical in 1891.<sup>2</sup> In his preface, Sweet rejected prescriptivism : "As my exposition is to be scientific, I confine myself to the statement and explanation of facts, without attempting to settle the relative correctness of divergent usages." Besides his own wide reading, Sweet also had recourse to the scholarly research of the Danish linguist, Otto Jespersen, in formulating judgments about usage.

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<sup>1</sup> Fitzedward Hall, Modern English (New York : Scribner, 1873).

<sup>2</sup> Henry Sweet, A New English Grammar : Logical and Historical (London : Oxford University Press, 1891).



### 1900-1930

In 1906 there appeared the first of the famous handbooks of style and usage by the Fowler brothers, who even today are probably the best known and most widely consulted authorities on either side of the Atlantic. Entitled The King's English, the book set the procedure and tone that were to become so familiar to generations of later readers.<sup>1</sup> Unlike Sweet, the Fowlers rejected a descriptive approach to usage; rather, they assumed certain standards of absolute correctness and then quoted "reputable authority" to illustrate breaches of the rules. Since evidence to support their judgments was rarely offered, the reader had to accept as an act of faith that the personal judgments of the Fowlers were a valid reflection of current Standard English usage. Their approach ran contrary to the normal practice of all contemporary lexicographers and descriptive linguists.

The first of seven volumes of Otto Jespersen's A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles was published in 1909.<sup>2</sup> Jespersen acknowledged five major sources of information on which he based his description : established authors (mainly British, but including a few major Americans), newspapers (mostly British), the Oxford English Dictionary, scholarly books and articles, and the commentary of his personal and professional acquaintances. His methods and judgments were very influential among later grammarians.

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<sup>1</sup> H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler, The King's English (London: Oxford University Press, 1906).

<sup>2</sup> Otto Jespersen, A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles (London : George Allen & Unwin, 1949).







In the same year the American linguist George Krapp published his Modern English, a more discursive treatment of the principles of language description and the habits of native speakers.<sup>1</sup> Krapp was among the earliest to formulate a statement of the doctrine of "appropriateness" in usage. He supplemented the usage theory of Lounsbury, who in the previous year argued against prescription in his The Standard of Usage in English, which upheld the practice of the best contemporary speakers and writers as the norm for usage.<sup>2</sup>

The first major handbook to adopt the descriptive approach was written by J. Lesslie Hall, whose English Usage in 1917 contained a full exposition of the doctrine of general usage as the sole determinant of social acceptability in language.<sup>3</sup> Following the example of Fitzedward Hall forty-five years earlier, English Usage based its judgments on thousands of citations from written English since the Anglo-Saxon period. Hall reported that he examined nearly 75,000 pages of reputable authors in England and America, and supplemented this research with the findings of scholarly grammars and the OED. It was Hall's intention to challenge the non-empirical statements about certain disputed items of usage in school texts and handbooks of the day.

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<sup>1</sup> George Philip Krapp, Modern English (New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas R. Lounsbury, The Standard of Usage in English (New York : Harper & Brothers, 1908).

<sup>3</sup> J. Lesslie Hall, English Usage (Chicago : Scott, Foresman, 1917).





The first edition of A Dictionary of Modern English Usage, by H.W. Fowler, appeared in 1926.<sup>1</sup> Fowler's approach has been described above. He frequently called upon the Oxford English Dictionary in support of his judgments, but in many cases he contradicted the findings of the dictionary. Some of the most valuable sections of Modern English Usage, it should be noted, deal with points of style and vocabulary, and do not involve matters of disputed usage.

It should be mentioned in passing that the year 1927 was of some historical interest in the movement toward a more widespread scientific approach to English usage. It marked the publication of the first major book by Charles Carpenter Fries, who was later to do so much pioneer work in gathering the materials and laying the guidelines for a completely descriptive grammar of English. In his The Teaching of the English Language, Fries stressed that the spontaneous language habits of educated people were the only valid criterion of acceptable usage.<sup>2</sup> He dismissed the idea that it is possible to establish a priori standards.

The same year marked the appearance of Krapp's The Knowledge of English, which contained a discursive treatment of theories of usage, written in the forceful style that was becoming common among linguists engaged with the problem:

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<sup>1</sup> H.W. Fowler, A Dictionary of Modern English Usage (London : Oxford University Press, 1926).

<sup>2</sup> Charles Carpenter Fries, The Teaching of the English Language (New York : Thomas Nelson, 1927).





The blind follower of authority, no matter how lofty or numerous his authorities, can never be an intelligent person. He may be a learned person, but to be intelligent he must follow his own and not somebody else's judgment....The greatest obstacle to the dissemination of the knowledge of good English is the bland evasion of all independent criticism of speech by obedient adherents to authority.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1925 and 1931 three important scholarly grammars appeared. The authors offered traditional descriptions of English, but made some attempt to support their judgments with citations from reputable sources, mainly written. Kruisinga found his evidence in standard authors and newspapers (largely British) and from the "speech of friends."<sup>2</sup> This mention of the spoken language is one of the very few in grammars or handbooks up to this time. Poutsma mainly employed literary citations,<sup>3</sup> while Curme acknowledged a wide range of sources, including the Oxford English Dictionary, scholarly grammars, reputable current magazines and newspapers, articles in scholarly journals, his own wide reading in British and American literature, and "the speech of educated people" plus the observations of his "friends," who described their own usage and their observations about usage in general.<sup>4</sup> These grammars are looked upon with great respect by today's linguists.

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<sup>1</sup> George Philip Krapp, The Knowledge of English (New York : Henry Holt, 1927), p.8.

<sup>2</sup> E. Kruisinga, A Handbook of Present-Day English (Utrecht : Kemink En Zoon, 1925).

<sup>3</sup> H. Poutsma, A Grammar of Late Modern English (Groningen : P. Noordhoff, 1928).

<sup>4</sup> George Curme, Syntax (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1931).



### 1930-1950

The first major investigation of opinion about current standards of usage in North America was conducted by Sterling Leonard and published in 1932 by the National Council of Teachers of English.<sup>1</sup> Leonard, who earlier had written the definitive work on the eighteenth-century origins of prescriptive grammar,<sup>2</sup> sent a list of sentences containing expressions "of whose standing there might be some question" to each of 229 judges, including editors, businessmen, linguists, and teachers in secondary school and university departments of English. The judges were asked to classify each expression as formal, informal, or illiterate usage on the basis of "what seemed to them to be the norm of usage among educated people generally." Items marked as formal or informal usage by more than 75 percent of the judges were accepted as established; disputable items were approved by fewer than 75 percent and disapproved by more than 25 percent; items termed illiterate were disapproved by more than 75 percent. Leonard found that a surprisingly large number of expressions condemned by textbooks were accepted and frequently used by educated speakers.

The second edition of Webster's New International Dictionary was published in 1934. It represented the most comprehensive and authoritative compilation of the characteristics of written Standard English on this continent.

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<sup>1</sup> Sterling Andrus Leonard, Current English Usage (Chicago : Inland Press, 1932).

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit.







In 1938 Marckwardt and Walcott published Facts About Current English Usage, which checked the 230 items used by Leonard against the judgments of the OED and the second edition of Webster's, supplemented by the findings of various reputable grammarians, including Jespersen and Curme.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of this evidence, each item was placed in one of six categories : Literary English, American Literary English, Colloquial English, American Colloquial English, Dialect, or Archaic. The investigators discovered that the recorded facts of usage found in the citations in the most respected dictionaries and grammars were far less conservative than the opinions on usage of Leonard's judges. Their conclusion was that in spite of the fact that most critics considered Leonard's findings too liberal, "a survey of fact rather than of opinion would, in all probability, have increased the number of established usages from a meager seventy-one to 177."

The first attempt to write a grammar of English based on a sizable corpus of the spontaneous writing of a large cross-section of contemporary Americans at all educational and occupational levels was published in 1940 by Fries in his American English Grammar. Unlike any of the earlier

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<sup>1</sup> Albert H. Marckwardt and Fred G. Walcott, Facts About Current English Usage (New York: Appleton-Century, 1938).

<sup>2</sup> C.C. Fries, American English Grammar (New York : Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1940).



studies, Fries' work was not limited to an examination of the so-called "disputed" usages; rather, it was concerned with a first-hand examination of all grammatical matters that appeared in the language of several social groups as revealed in thousands of letters to the U.S. Department of the Interior in the years following 1926. Fries classified the writers of the letters by education and occupation, then examined their language in order to isolate the characteristics of what he termed "Standard English," "Popular or Common English," and "Vulgar English." The study was a valuable record of how people use language in writing; it did not, however, discover how people react to usage. Furthermore, as Fries admitted, the letters revealed nothing about the grammar of spoken English. Fries' general conclusions were twofold : first, many language items discussed and drilled in the schools were not matters of distinction between standard and nonstandard writing; second, the language of the uneducated deviates from that of Standard English much less than is usually assumed, the most striking difference being richness of vocabulary rather than usage.

In the decade following the publication of Fries' grammar, the National Council of Teachers of English produced two books designed to spread the theory of usage, and the results of various investigations, among teachers of English in public school classrooms. Kennedy's English Usage in 1942 contained no fresh research, but it discussed the prin-







principles behind a descriptive approach to language, using miscellaneous examples of disputed usage and quoting various previous statements about usage problems and the findings of linguistic research.<sup>1</sup> Better known is Pooley's Teaching English Usage, published in 1946 as a specific guide to the teaching of certain disputed items at the various grade levels.<sup>2</sup> Pooley attempted to isolate only the most common items, basing his judgments on articles about language in popular magazines and scholarly periodicals, textbooks, grammars, handbooks, and dictionaries, all supplemented by his own experience and the advice of friends in English, linguistics, and Education. Once again, his stress was on the written language.

In Harper's magazine in 1949 Lewis reported a study in which he sent nineteen sentences, each containing a commonly disputed usage, to 468 judges, including high school and college English teachers, authors, editors, radio commentators, journalists, lexicographers, and a random sampling of Harper's subscribers. He asked the judges to rate the locutions on a four-point scale of acceptability "in everyday speech." He found college teachers of English most liberal in their opinions, and high school English teachers quite severe.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur G. Kennedy, English Usage (New York : Appleton-Century, 1942).

<sup>2</sup> Robert C. Pooley, Teaching English Usage (New York: Appleton-Century, 1946).

<sup>3</sup> Norman Lewis, "How Correct Must Correct English Be?" Harper's (March 1949), pp. 68-79. His findings should be compared with those reported in Chapter V.





1950-1960

In the fourth edition of The American Language, published in 1936, H.L. Mencken had complained, "American philologists have printed admirable studies of many of the other languages spoken in the United States, including the most obscure Indian tongues, but incredible as it may seem, they have yet to produce a grammar of the daily speech of nearly 100,000,000 Americans."<sup>1</sup> Fries had attempted a partial answer at the written level to Mencken's challenge when he produced his American English Grammar, but it was not until the appearance in 1952 of his The Structure of English that the foundation for a grammar of spoken Standard English was laid.<sup>2</sup> Fries based his analysis on a corpus of spoken English consisting of fifty hours of telephone conversation by three hundred speakers in a university community in the "north central United States" (more precisely, Ann Arbor, Michigan). Unlike his earlier grammar, The Structure of English was not concerned with standards of usage among different social classes; it centered primarily on the formal structure of complete utterances. However, it is important in the history of the usage movement in that it pointed the way for greater future emphasis on the usage of spoken English, and demonstrated the possibilities of electronic equipment in gathering linguistic data.

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<sup>1</sup> H.L. Mencken, The American Language (New York : Alfred Knopf, 1962), p.417.

<sup>2</sup> C.C. Fries, The Structure of English (New York : Harcourt, Brace, 1952).





In 1957 Eric Partridge published the fifth edition of Usage and Abusage, a popular conservative treatment of British usage in the Fowler tradition.<sup>1</sup> Like Fowler, whom he frequently quotes, Partridge is valued more for his commentary on matters not involving divided usage; the authoritarian principles underlying his judgments on usage lie outside the mainstream of descriptive linguistics in this century.

The continuing popularity and influence of Fowler was demonstrated in 1957 with the appearance of Margaret Nicholson's A Dictionary of American-English Usage, which was essentially Fowler's Modern English Usage except for the omission of some examples, and the addition of "some new entries and illustrations."<sup>2</sup> The adaptation was slight, and Fowler's original judgments were left with little or no adjustment or qualification.

The first major handbook of American usage was published in 1957.<sup>3</sup> The work of Bergen and Cornelia Evans, A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage drew on evidence contained in the Oxford English Dictionary, the American College Dictionary, the work of Fries and Mencken, articles in American Speech, and in the writings of several American and British linguists. The authors did not conduct any fresh

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Partridge, Usage and Abusage (London : Hamish Hamilton, 1957).

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Nicholson, A Dictionary of American-English Usage (New York : Oxford University Press, 1957).

<sup>3</sup> Bergen Evans and Cornelia Evans, A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage (New York : Random House, 1957).



investigation; their work must be considered a summary of the most informed opinion and research available at the time.

During this decade a few individual studies of opinion on usage were reported. In 1953 Avis gave a list of twelve commonly disputed items to a class of fifty prospective English teachers at the University of Michigan. He found very little consensus, and concluded:

The confusion here in evidence will no doubt be shared by at least a part of the next generation of students. They, like their teachers, will be of divided opinion concerning the correctness of the foregoing locutions.<sup>1</sup>

In a frequently quoted study of the attitudes of English teachers, Womack surveyed opinion on fifty debatable items among 339 teachers in forty-five states, all of them NCTE members at every educational level from elementary school to college. The results were that "The majority of the teachers still reject most usages that published information tends to support as acceptable."<sup>2</sup>

In one of the rare attempts to study reaction to spoken language, Stageberg tested one thousand officers and airmen at Maxwell Air Force Base.<sup>3</sup> His aim was to investigate spontaneous reaction to a variety of case forms in the

<sup>1</sup> W.S. Avis, "Prospective English Teachers Judge Good Usage," College English (October 1953), p.47.

<sup>2</sup> Thurston Womack, "Teachers' Attitudes Toward Current Usage," English Journal (April 1959), p.188,

<sup>3</sup> Norman C. Stageberg, "Is It Really We?" English Journal (March 1955), p.163.







personal pronoun used as subjective complement. His judges were asked to assume "an informal party atmosphere," and to react to the sentences, which were read aloud, in one of two ways : 1) Acceptance "if it is a sentence that you might normally and comfortably use in conversation with your friends in this situation"; 2) Rejection "if it is a sentence that you would avoid using in conversation with friends in this situation." The thirty-two sentences were read at conversational tempo, and instant response was required. Stageberg found a widely divided reaction to varying case forms, with a "tendency" to the use of the subjective.

In 1959 appeared the third edition of the most respected of the numerous college handbooks on composition and usage, Perrin's Writer's Guide & Index to English, which was initially published in 1939 and represented the first major step away from prescriptivism in textbook publishing.<sup>1</sup> Like the great descriptive grammarians of the past, Perrin based his judgments on dictionaries, textbooks, grammars, and scholarly articles. His focus was largely on the written language.

In the same year, Malmstrom reported her famous study of school textbook statements about usage in the light of Linguistic Atlas data. She found the same discrepancy

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<sup>1</sup> Porter G. Perrin, Writer's Guide & Index to English (Chicago : Scott, Foresman, 1959). A more recent edition appeared in 1965.





between statement and practice criticized in other analyses of textbooks.<sup>1</sup>

### Since 1960

The most monumental publication about language in this decade was Webster's Third New International Dictionary in 1961. The editors placed heavy stress on "cultivated conversational usage" as the cornerstone of Standard English. They dropped the label "colloquial" on the grounds that such a description was impossible to apply to a word or expression out of context. Although the citations were necessarily from written English, the emphasis was on contemporary sources, and frequently on the spoken language as quoted in magazines and newspapers. The controversy that greeted the dictionary was discussed briefly in Chapter I.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Malmstrom, "Linguistic Atlas Findings Versus Textbook Pronouncements on Current American Usage," English Journal (April 1959), p. 191. Other major studies include Robert C. Pooley, Grammar and Usage in Textbooks on English (Bureau of Educational Research Bulletin, No. 14, University of Wisconsin, 1933) ; Elizabeth Rusk, The Treatment of 167 English Usages in Twelfth-Grade Language Textbooks, 1931-51 (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Illinois, 1953) ; and James J. Lynch and Bertrand Evans, High School English Texts : A Critical Examination (Boston : Atlantic, Little, Brown, 1963). A survey of the non-descriptive treatment of a specific point of usage is reported in Jack R. Cameron, "Traditionalists, Textbooks, and Non-English Grammar," Elementary English (February 1964), pp.145-48.

<sup>2</sup> Extensive evidence of the debate is found in James Sledd and Wilma R. Ebbitt, Dictionaries and That Dictionary (Chicago : Scott, Foresman, 1962).





An important handbook on American usage was published in 1962 by Margaret Bryant.<sup>1</sup> Her Current American Usage drew on evidence in dictionaries and linguistic journals, in grammars and handbooks, in contemporary newspapers and magazines, in theses, in Linguistic Atlas research, and finally, on the "personal opinion" of linguists consulted by the author.

Quirk has reported on investigations in progress as part of a continuing Survey of Educated English Usage at University College in London, England.<sup>2</sup> The scope of these studies is much wider than a simple investigation of disputed usage items. Quirk and his associates are undertaking the assembly of a large corpus on which they will ultimately base a descriptive grammar of English. Special emphasis will be placed on "the usage of natural speech...in its chief educated varieties."<sup>3</sup>

Pooley recently submitted eleven usage items to one thousand junior and senior high school teachers of English, who were invited to express opinions on the status of each

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Bryant, Current American Usage (New York : Funk-Wagnalls, 1962).

<sup>2</sup> Randolph Quirk, "Types of Deviance in English Sentences," in A Common Purpose (Champaign, Illinois : National Council of Teachers of English, 1965).

<sup>3</sup> Randolph Quirk, "Towards a Description of English Usage," Transactions of the Philological Society (1960), p.53.



according to a four-point scale.<sup>1</sup> Almost all of the usages are fully accepted by most authoritative sources as Informal Standard; however, forty-six percent of the teachers classed them as unacceptable.

The most recent handbook of usage produced in the United States is Follett's Modern American Usage, begun in 1958 and published in 1966.<sup>2</sup> The author rejected the descriptive approach of linguistic science, adopting Fowler's method of quoting "faulty" sentences to illustrate the proscriptions. Unlike Fowler, Follett supplied no sources for his quotations.

The most ambitious continuing investigation of the speech habits of North Americans is that connected with the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada.<sup>3</sup> Established in 1930 under the direction of Hans Kurath, this work in linguistic geography employs trained field workers to record the differences in grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary among representative members of a speech community.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Pooley, "Summary of Usage Opinions," Wisconsin English-Language-Arts Curriculum Project (1966). Mimeo.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson Follett, Modern American Usage (New York : Hill & Wang, 1966).

<sup>3</sup> Hans Kurath, A Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England (Providence : Brown University Press, 1939).







Like the work of Fries, the Atlas is purely descriptive, and makes no specific effort to determine the attitudes of educated people towards a specified set of usages. The linguistic geographers have focused more on folk and common speech than on cultured speech; their findings, however, represent an important body of data on Standard English. Work on the Atlas, which has been slight in Canada, will continue slowly as funds and trained workers become available.

As for specific investigations of current usage in North America, Udell reports that a survey conducted by the usage committee of the American Dialect Society revealed a rather discouraging lack of action :

It would seem that not much is being done or planned to collect evidence of present day American usage in large ways....It would seem to follow that what is being done with regard to usage study, while it includes projects of substantial worth and some of considerable promise, falls considerably short, nevertheless, of what is to be desired.<sup>1</sup>

In Canada the principal continuing work centers on matters of native vocabulary and dialect differences. Much of this research is sporadic, although the advent of Centennial Year has aroused more than normal interest in the language habits of Canadians. The three volumes of the Dictionary of Canadian English have been produced.<sup>2</sup> Based on the Thorndike-Barnhart dictionaries, the DCE includes native Canadian words and is adapted to Canadian pronunciation.

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald Udell, "What Investigations of American Usage are Presently in Progress?" (Letter No. 10 : Usage Committee, American Dialect Society, 1965). Mimeo.

<sup>2</sup> W.S. Avis, and others, eds., Dictionary of Canadian English (Toronto : Gage, 1962-63-67).



It does not describe the basis for its judgments about usage in Canada.

Finally, underlying the history of the usage movement, particularly during the past fifty years, are hundreds of articles in such scholarly journals as American Speech, College English, English Journal, and Quarterly Journal of Speech.

In recent years the interest of these publications has frequently centered on the application of linguistic theories to public school instruction. The tone of the articles has often been one of regret that descriptive usage has not gained more widespread acceptance on both sides of the Atlantic. The following remark by McMillan,

In fact, a remarkable dichotomy has occurred, with the specialists in language operating almost completely outside the sphere of the teachers and textbook writers in grammar, composition, and rhetoric.<sup>1</sup>

might be compared to the more recent statement by Quirk in England:

It is a disheartening fact that we still find in educated professional people --- teachers, journalists, public figures --- the most alarming and preposterous naivety over matters like standard language and 'good' grammar.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James B. McMillan, "A Philosophy of Language," College English (April 1948), p.385.

<sup>2</sup> Randolph Quirk and A.H. Smith, eds., The Teaching of English (London : Oxford University Press, 1964), p.11.







Many articles in the journals discuss individual items of usage. Most of these are based on written evidence, and tell the investigator little about the speech habits of North Americans. Furthermore, like almost all research in the field, these articles are reports on usage rather than reports on the effects of usage. Linguistic science has discovered a great deal about how people write the language, and somewhat less about how they speak it, but data on how users of Standard English react to disputed usage in a spontaneous written or spoken situation is meager.



## C H A P T E R   I I I

### D E S I G N   O F   T H E   S T U D Y

This chapter describes how the forty-five judges used in the investigation were selected and divided into three groups on the basis of differences in professional and academic background. It also describes the basis for selection of the forty usage errors, the three spoken and written contexts in which the errors were embedded, and the procedure followed in obtaining the reactions of the judges to the errors. Following this outline of the design is a sequence of fourteen hypotheses which the study was intended to test, together with a description of the statistical treatment of the data arising from the study.

#### I   S E L E C T I O N   O F   T H E   G R O U P S   O F   J U D G E S U S E D   I N   T H E   I N V E S T I G A T I O N

The selection of the judges for the investigation was made in the fall of 1966 from the business and academic communities of Edmonton, Alberta, a cosmopolitan city with a population in excess of 375,000. Forty-five judges were selected, and divided into three groups of fifteen members each, named the Business Group, the University Group, and





the English Group.<sup>1</sup>

Membership in the three groups was restricted to native speakers of the English language who had lived for at least five years in the United States or Canada. A majority of the judges were reared in Canada.

### The Business Group

Thirteen members of the Business Group were employed in personnel work with large businesses or with the civil service. They included the chief personnel managers of the principal department stores, of the major utilities, of television and radio stations, of the University of Alberta, of the Public School Board, and of the civic, provincial, and federal governments. The other two members were the owner of a large bookstore, and the president of a major real estate company. This group, drawn largely from the membership list of the Edmonton Personnel Association, represented a cross-section of the businessmen and public officials responsible for interviewing and hiring people for positions that require fluency and correctness in the use of the English language. These are the executives with whom the graduates of high schools and universities frequently make their critical first contact when they are seeking employment.

The qualification of being a high-ranking member of the executive class in a major organization was the only professional control applied to the members of the Business

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<sup>1</sup> The judges are listed in Appendix B.



Group. The amount of formal education of these judges was not considered relevant.<sup>1</sup> All of them currently hold positions for which the speaking and writing of good English is a prerequisite; since they have been given key managerial responsibilities, they ostensibly may be classed as speakers of Standard English, that is, members of "that large group who are carrying on the affairs of English-speaking people."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the language standards of men in the personnel field are of particular concern to the English educator, because it is they who make the crucial judgments about the linguistic efficiency of the graduates of the public schools. Their formal education is of no consequence to the educator who wishes to gather evidence on which he can base an English language curriculum in harmony with the realities of the world abroad. The important thing is that members of this group represent a valid cross-section of the influential business community.

### The University Group

The University Group consisted of four prominent administrators and eleven teachers outside the Department of English at the University of Alberta. The academics held the rank of Assistant Professor or higher, and were chosen as a representative sampling of the academic community in the Faculties of Arts, Science, and Education. Twelve members

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<sup>1</sup> A majority, however, held university degrees.

<sup>2</sup> C.C. Fries, "Usage Levels..." op. cit., p.277.







of the University Group possessed the doctorate.

Judged by virtually any definition that has been proposed, members of this group must be classed as speakers of Standard English.

### The English Group

The English Group consisted of eight English teachers from Edmonton high schools, and seven members of the English Department at the University of Alberta holding the rank of Assistant Professor or higher.

The high school teachers were all college graduates with majors in English, and had extensive teaching experience. Four of them were department heads in large schools.

Judged by virtually any definition that has been proposed, members of this group must be classed as speakers of Standard English.

## II THE TEST INSTRUMENT

### Usage Items

Forty items of usage were selected for inclusion in the test material.<sup>1</sup> Only items which fulfilled all of the following qualifications were chosen:

- 1) They are of frequent occurrence in speech and writing.
- 2) They are condemned or restricted to very informal speech by textbooks in Canada, or are considered

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<sup>1</sup> The forty usage items are listed in Appendix A.



"errors" on government examinations.

- 3) Some conflict over the item's status exists between authoritative linguistic opinion and school textbook opinion.<sup>1</sup>

The items of usage were selected from the official textbooks or major references recommended by the several provincial Departments of Education.<sup>2</sup> A special effort was made to include items commonly occurring on official year-end examinations in junior and senior high schools. For this purpose, several government examinations in English published across Canada between 1961 and 1965 were collected;<sup>3</sup> an effort was made to select items common to the various provinces and repeated from year to year, since presumably these were judged cardinal errors by the makers of the examinations, and would be given special emphasis in the English classes of the nation.

#### The Test Materials<sup>4</sup>

The forty items of usage were embedded in three different media:

- 1) They were incorporated into a simulated spoken interview between a young university graduate and the personnel manager of a book publishing

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> The test instrument, including a transcription of the taped interview, and copies of the business letters and sentences, is included in Appendix A.





firm seeking staff to act as representatives to retail booksellers and university professors. The dialogue, which lasted approximately seven minutes, was tape-recorded. An effort was made to distribute the usage items evenly through the interview, and to avoid any unusually rapid speech which might have unduly disguised the items.

- 2) They were incorporated into a selection of formal business correspondence. In as many cases as possible, the items occurred in the letters in a sentence construction similar to that employed in the spoken interview. The investigator was careful to guard against disguising the items by embedding them in unusually long or complicated constructions.
- 3) They were incorporated into a series of isolated sentences, each containing one item of usage. Once again, in many cases the items occurred in sentences as similar as possible in construction to those of the spoken interview.

### Procedure

The judges were tested individually, usually in their offices. First they were asked to read a mimeographed page of introductory remarks which summarized the experiment and assured them that no formal test of their knowledge of English was involved.<sup>1</sup>

The judges were then asked to read the page entitled, "Directions for Listening," which set the scene of the interview and explained how they were to react to the recording.

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<sup>1</sup> When asked to take part in the experiment, several judges replied that if any grasp of the grammar that they had learned in school was required, they would be of little help.



The judges were provided with a desk bell, which they were instructed to ring if any of the language used by either of the speakers was in any way bothersome or offensive, or inappropriate to the interview situation. Interruptions were encouraged, no matter how mild the objection might be. Unless the judge wished to supply it, no explanation or justification for an objection was required.

When a judge signalled an interruption, the investigator paused the tape recorder, and the comments of the judge were recorded on a second machine. This procedure allowed for a more thorough analysis of the commentary at the investigator's leisure. If at any point the nature of the objection was not clear, the judge was asked to clarify or expand upon his objection. However, the questioning was at all times very casual, and free from grammatical terminology. After each objection, the taped interview was reversed for a few inches to make it easier for the judge to pick up the thread of the discussion.

At the conclusion of the tape, each judge was asked if he had any general comments to make on the linguistic ability of the speakers; these observations were not part of the formal experiment, but should be of interest to anyone concerned with standards of usage.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Representative comments by the judges on different points of usage and on the fluency of the speakers are included in Appendix E.







The judges were then asked to turn to the mimeographed sheet entitled "Directions for Reading," which explained the nature of the printed material and suggested that they read the letters "with the same speed and attention that you might employ in the course of a normal working day." Spelling and punctuation were to be ignored. If the judges met any words or phrases that seemed inappropriate to them, or that made them critical to some degree of the language ability of the writer, they were to underline that word or expression without comment. Judges were asked not to read any sentences more than twice.

When the judges had finished marking the letters, they turned to the final section of the test, composed of forty sentences, each containing one of the selected usage items. The judges were asked to rate each sentence according to a three-point scale:

- 1) Accepted in any situation.
- 2) Rejected in any situation.
- 3) Restricted to certain situations (e.g., speech or writing, formal or informal, etc.).

If a sentence was marked Rejected or Restricted, the judges were instructed to underline the offensive portion. For Restricted items, judges were asked for a brief written comment on the nature of the restriction.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> If the restriction excluded the expression only from very formal speech or writing, it was not classed as an "objection." On the other hand, if the expression had not been objected to in the taped dialogue, yet was restricted to "casual dialogue between friends," it was classified as an objection. If it was restricted to "speech only," yet was not objected to in the letters, it was classed as an objection. To be consistent, the investigator had to make these arbitrary decisions about items in the Restricted category.



When all of the sentences had been marked, the judges were asked to turn back to the block of letters and to explain briefly the basis for their objections to the underlined items. They were not allowed to mark any new items. The investigator then inspected their classifications of the sentences to make certain that he understood the nature of the Restriction placed on any item. All comments on the letters and sentences were tape-recorded to facilitate later analysis.

One disadvantage of a tripartite study of identical usage items is that a judge's performance on one section of the test might influence his performance on the other sections. The attempt to minimize a "halo effect" explains the progression from speech to letters to sentences. A basic hypothesis of the study was that the judges would reveal increasing sensitivity through this progression. Thus the medium of speech, in which the fewest protests might be anticipated, was placed first. Delaying any comment on the underlined items in the letters avoided influencing judgments on the sentences unduly. Finally, preventing judges from marking any new items in the letters after completing the sentences guaranteed that there would be no retroactive increase in sensitivity to the letters.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Many times, in fact, a judge explaining his protests in the letters commented, "Oh, there's a mistake I missed the first time!" Such objections, of course, were not recorded.







### III HYPOTHESES

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#### Definition of Terms

In the hypotheses below, the following definitions apply:

usage errors - The forty items of usage listed in Appendix A.

university faculty - Members of the academic and administrative staff of the University of Alberta listed in Appendix B.

speakers of Standard English - Members of the three groups of judges (Business, University, English) listed in Appendix B.

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The investigation was designed to test a series of directional hypotheses, which were subdivided into three problems, identified as A, B, and C.

#### PROBLEM A : CHANGES IN SENSITIVITY TO USAGE ERRORS WITH CHANGES IN THE MEDIA OF PRESENTATION

Problem A is composed of seven hypotheses which state that a speaker of Standard English, whether he is a businessman, a member of a university faculty, or a teacher of English, is not rigid in his sensitivity to errors in usage. When he is presented with usage errors in the context of speech, he will not object to as many as he will if he is presented with the errors in the context of written prose -- business letters, for instance. Furthermore, if the same errors are presented in a list of isolated sentences, he will object to a larger number than he did in the context of letters.



Hypotheses 1, 1.a., 1.b., and 1.c. deal with the combined reaction of the forty-five judges in the three groups (Business, University, English) to changes in the media of presentation.

Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 deal with the reaction of each group individually to changes in the media of presentation.

### Combined Groups of Judges

#### Hypothesis 1

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of media from speech to letters to isolated sentences.

#### Hypothesis 1.a.

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of media from speech to letters.

#### Hypothesis 1.b.

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of media from speech to isolated sentences.

#### Hypothesis 1.c.

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of media from letters to isolated sentences.

### Business Group

#### Hypothesis 2

The number of usages identified as errors by businessmen increases significantly with a change of media from







speech to letters to isolated sentences.

University Group

Hypothesis 3

The number of usages identified as errors by university faculty increases significantly with a change of media from speech to letters to isolated sentences.

English Group

Hypothesis 4

The number of usages identified as errors by teachers of English increases significantly with a change of media from speech to letters to isolated sentences.

PROBLEM B : CHANGES IN SENSITIVITY  
TO USAGE ERRORS WITH CHANGES  
IN THE GROUPS OF JUDGES

Problem B is composed of seven hypotheses which state that sensitivity to errors in usage is not the same for different groups of speakers of Standard English. Businessmen, who have less formal education and who have not been subjected to the discipline of scholarly writing, might be expected to be less sensitive to usage than members of a university faculty. Both businessmen and faculty members, furthermore, might be expected to be less sensitive than teachers of English in high school and university, who have more language education and who are chronically engaged in the marking of written work.



Hypotheses 5, 5.a., 5.b., and 5.c. deal with the reaction of the three groups to the combined media.

Hypotheses 6, 7, and 8 deal with the reaction of the three groups to the individual media.

### Combined Media of Presentation

#### Hypothesis 5

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of judges from businessmen to university faculty to English teachers.

#### Hypothesis 5.a.

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of judges from businessmen to university faculty.

#### Hypothesis 5.b.

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of judges from businessmen to English teachers.

#### Hypothesis 5.c.

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of judges from university faculty to English teachers.

### Speech

#### Hypothesis 6

The number of usages identified as errors in speech increases significantly with a change of judges from businessmen to university faculty to English teachers.





### Letters

#### Hypothesis 7

The number of usages identified as errors in letters increases significantly with a change of judges from businessmen to university faculty to English teachers.

### Isolated Sentences

#### Hypothesis 8

The number of usages identified as errors in isolated sentences increases significantly with a change of judges from businessmen to university faculty to English teachers.

### PROBLEM C : RANK-ORDER CORRELATION OF OBJECTIONS TO THE ERRORS IN USAGE

Problem C is composed of six hypotheses which state that on a scale of acceptability from most objectionable to least objectionable:

(a) Speakers of Standard English agree on the ranking of usage errors in spite of changes in the medium of presentation from speech to letters to isolated sentences.

(b) Different groups of speakers of Standard English tend to agree on the ranking of usage errors.

### Changes in Media of Presentation

#### Hypothesis 9

There is a significant positive rank-order correlation between the usages identified as errors in speech and letters by speakers of Standard English.



Hypothesis 10

There is a significant positive rank-order correlation between the usages identified as errors in speech and isolated sentences by speakers of Standard English.

Hypothesis 11

There is a significant positive rank-order correlation between the usages identified as errors in letters and isolated sentences by speakers of Standard English.

Changes in Groups of JudgesHypothesis 12

There is a significant positive rank-order correlation between the usages identified as errors in combined media by businessmen and university faculty.

Hypothesis 13

There is a significant positive rank-order correlation between the usages identified as errors in combined media by businessmen and English teachers.

Hypothesis 14

There is a significant positive rank-order correlation between the usages identified as errors in combined media by university faculty and English teachers.

#### IV LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited in the following ways :

1) The study is not principally a survey of usage, but seeks only to establish certain guidelines in technique





for future surveys on a larger scale. The sample of forty-five judges is too small to use even their combined judgments on an item as evidence of that item's status in Standard English. The sample is large enough, however, to justify speculation. In some cases, where a trend is clearly apparent, the results might be used as a basis for fairly confident prediction of the findings of a more extensive survey.

2) The study is concerned only with a restricted list of usage items of whose standing there appears to be some doubt. It is not concerned with usage that is clearly non-standard (I done it, He ain't here, etc.). Nor is the study concerned with the sensitivity of people to such linguistic phenomena as slang, neologisms, triteness, and vulgarity.

3) The Business and University Groups were composed entirely of men. Whether the inclusion of women would have significantly changed the performance of these groups is unknown.

## V TREATMENT OF THE DATA<sup>1</sup>

(A) Analysis of the data of Problems A and B involved the application of the Chi-square test for significance of differences

- 1) between the number of usages identified as errors when the medium of communication changed;

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<sup>1</sup> After G.A. Ferguson, Statistical Analysis in Psychology and Education (New York : McGraw-Hill, 1959).



- 2) between the number of usages identified as errors when the group making the judgment changed.

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum [F_o - F_e]}{F_e}$$

- (B) Analysis of the data of Problem C involved the computation of the rank-order correlation of the individual items of usage according to acceptability :

$$p = 1 - \frac{6 \sum x^2 D^2}{N (N^2 - 1)}$$

## VI SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL

The level of significance used throughout the investigation was the 0.01 level.

## VII REPORTING THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The investigation was designed to test a series of directional hypotheses, which were subdivided into three problems, identified as follows :

- Problem A - Does sensitivity to usage errors vary with a change in the medium of presentation?
- Problem B - Does sensitivity to usage errors vary with a change in the occupational and academic background of the judge?
- Problem C - Do speakers of Standard English with different backgrounds agree on the relative seriousness of usage errors in different media?





Chapter IV describes the results of the investigation into Problem A. Chapter V deals with Problem B, and Chapter VI with Problem C. Chapter VII contains a summary of the investigation, conclusions and recommendations arising from the results of the investigation, and suggestions for further research.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

#### PROBLEM A : CHANGES IN SENSITIVITY TO USAGE ERRORS WITH CHANGES IN THE MEDIA OF PRESENTATION

This group of seven hypotheses was designed to answer the following question : Is the speaker of Standard English just as sensitive to errors in speech as he is to errors in extended written language, and is he just as sensitive to errors in these media as he is to errors in isolated written sentences?

#### Combined Groups of Judges<sup>1</sup>

##### Hypothesis 1

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of media from speech to letters to isolated sentences.

Table I contains the individual and total objections of the combined groups of judges to the forty items of usage according to their occurrence in speech, letters, and sentences. The total number of objections for each medium was converted to percentages, which are summarized in Figure 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Some terms used in the hypotheses are defined on page 44.





The chi-square test for significance of differences was applied to the three totals in Table I. The differences proved significant at the 0.01 level.<sup>1</sup> Hypothesis 1 was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 1.a.

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of media from speech to letters.

The chi-square test for significance of differences was applied to the totals for speech and letters in Table I. The differences proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 1.a. was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 1.b.

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of media from speech to isolated sentences.

The differences of the totals for speech and sentences in Table I proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 1.b. was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 1.c.

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of media from letters to isolated sentences.

The differences of the totals for letters and sentences in Table I proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 1.c. was therefore accepted.

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<sup>1</sup> All chi-square values are listed in Appendix F.





TOTAL OBJECTIONS OF ALL FORTY-FIVE JUDGES TO EACH  
USAGE ERROR IN SPEECH, LETTERS, AND SENTENCES

U S A G E	I T E M	S P E E C H	L E T T E R	S E N T E N C E
1)	I <u>only</u> borrowed five dollars.	2	10	17
2)	This bread is different <u>than</u> that.	2	14	24
3)	She feels <u>badly</u> about it.	5	3	11
4)	The problem of <u>us</u> having to go...	7	17	27
5)	Neither John nor Bill <u>were</u> here.	6	6	23
6)	Everybody put on <u>their</u> hats.	4	2	24
7)	Neither of them <u>have</u> money.	4	5	27
8)	The chance of <u>me</u> staying...	8	25	31
9)	It looks <u>like</u> I failed.	4	11	33
10)	<u>Who</u> did you see?	2	12	28
11)	They will try <u>and</u> meet us.	1	17	32
12)	The toys were <u>laying</u> around.	21	28	34
13)	One of those men who <u>likes</u> ...	4	5	10
14)	Not only learn but also <u>to meet</u> ...	0	1	10
15)	If I <u>was</u> you, I would go.	8	22	32
16)	Did anyone forget <u>their</u> hat?	6	13	33
17)	A choice <u>between</u> three routes...	4	15	27
18)	Each of them <u>have</u> a turn.	9	24	39
19)	He died, <u>which</u> shocked us.	1	1	34
20)	I know better than <u>her</u> who left.	13	32	38
21)	There was a <u>sort of</u> agreement.	1	18	18
22)	It is between father and <u>I</u> .	16	31	31
23)	Wasn't it <u>him</u> we saw?	15	41	41
24)	His failure is <u>aggravating</u> .	4	11	13
25)	The loss has <u>gotten</u> serious.	15	27	29
26)	It is the <u>least</u> drab of the two.	9	11	21
27)	It is the <u>best</u> of the two boats.	16	11	31
28)	Everyone took <u>their</u> own books.	11	11	30
29)	I <u>contacted</u> your office.	0	1	4
30)	<u>Can</u> I ask you a question?	3	0	33
31)	It was <u>awfully</u> close.	4	38	39
32)	We met <u>lots of</u> people.	2	33	39
33)	They fell for <u>quite</u> some time.	1	0	6
34)	He was <u>proven</u> guilty.	0	4	6
35)	It was noon, <u>so</u> we had lunch.	0	2	7
36)	I <u>guess</u> we can do it.	1	3	18
37)	<u>Due to</u> illness, he failed.	8	7	17
38)	The woman fell <u>in</u> the river.	6	14	22
39)	Perhaps I <u>will</u> go.	0	3	5
40)	The reason he left was <u>because</u> ...	8	14	21
	(Wasn't it <u>he</u> I saw?)*	(33)*		
T O T A L O B J E C T I O N S		228	533	975

\* A discussion of this usage is found on page 59.





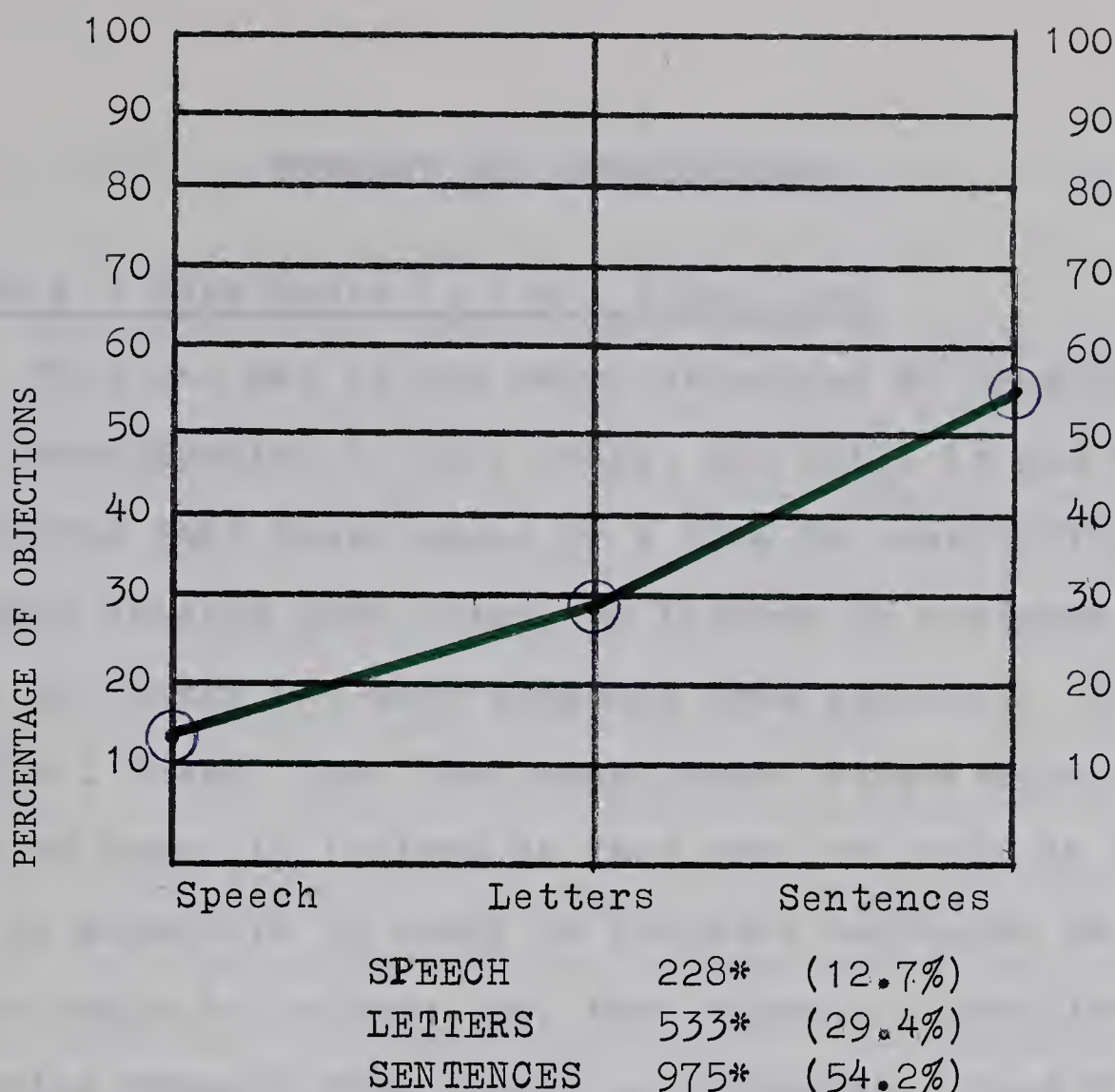


FIGURE 1\*\*

PERCENTAGE OF OBJECTIONS TO THE FORTY USAGE ERRORS  
IN SPEECH, LETTERS, AND SENTENCES MADE BY  
THE COMBINED GROUP OF FORTY-FIVE JUDGES

\*Each figure in the table represents the number of objections out of 1800 exposures (40 usage items x 45 judges).

\*\*It should be noted that the only significant points in Figure 1 are those circled on the ordinates. The line graph is used because it illustrates more dramatically the increase in sensitivity. Before the graph between the present three ordinates could be plotted more accurately, the usage items would have to be presented to the judges in other contexts. For instance, presentation within a very formal spoken address would probably produce a percentage of objections somewhere between speech and letters. Presentation within very casual family conversation, on the other hand, would probably produce a lower percentage of objections than that for the speech of a semi-formal interview plotted above.



## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Problem A : Hypotheses 1, 1.a., 1.b., 1.c.

This was one of the major sequences of hypotheses under investigation in this study, and while it had been anticipated that there would be a rise in sensitivity as the media changed from speech to letters to sentences, the degree of change was more dramatic than expected. The totals in Table I reveal that the judges were **over** twice as sensitive to usage in letters as they were to usage in speech, twice as sensitive to usage in isolated sentences as they were to usage in letters, and four times as sensitive when the medium changed from speech to sentences. Such findings cast serious doubt on the validity of judgments about usage based on a list of isolated sentences.

It is noteworthy that the pattern of response of all groups was very similar. The individual graphs for each group in Figure 2 (page 69) are strikingly similar in progression to the mean represented in Figure 1. This similarity of pattern is evidence of the reliability of the test instrument in measuring variation of sensitivity between media.

The relatively high sensitivity to usage in isolated sentences is easily explained. Many of the judges in all three groups commented that once meaning no longer was a factor, as in the case of the sentences, the usage "errors" became more obvious. In speech and letters, the semantic content apparently acted as a camouflage. Another reason







for the discrepancy was the amount of exposure to the items allowed the judges in each of the three media. The speech they heard only once; the letters were to be read no more than twice; the sentences, however, could be studied as much as desired. In many cases it was apparent that a judge was subjecting each sentence to an extremely thorough scrutiny; a common exclamation was, "I really can't remember what the grammar books said about this!" The reference to grammar books suggests yet another reason for the more critical reaction to sentences : it is possible that the list of sentences stimulated a response conditioned by years of searching for and correcting "errors" in textbook lists.

Apart from the relative degrees of sensitivity, the findings summarized in Figure 1 reveal a rather surprising lack of general sensitivity to a group of usage items condemned or severely restricted by textbooks and examinations in the public schools. If the total objections for all media are added (1736), and expressed as a percentage of the total number of 5400 exposures (40 items x 15 judges x 3 groups x 3 media), the results show a mean objection of 32.14 percent. If the reactions to isolated sentences are omitted, the mean objection to items in the contexts of speech and letters is only 21.13 percent. And because of the artificiality of the test situation, these figures probably reveal a more conservative reaction than the judges would evince if they were faced with the same usages



in a normal language environment.<sup>1</sup>

A curious and somewhat ironic postscript to the results of the speech test appears in the totals for individual items of usage listed in Table I. At the bottom of the list, in parentheses, is the construction "Wasn't it he I saw?", which is formally correct and thus was not included in the list of "errors." This construction appeared in the following sentence during the course of the taped interview : "Wasn't that he I saw on television the other night?" All three groups of judges registered more protests against this item than against any of the forty disputed usages. Criticisms included "stilted," "over-precise," "artificial," and "unnatural, although grammatically correct." All judges said that "him" would sound much more natural. Yet later in the tape, the expression "As a matter of fact, it was him who sent me..." received one of the largest negative votes of any item in speech. The results in this matter were completely contradictory, and may lend some support to Smith's contention that prescriptive schoolroom drill on certain items of usage tends to create linguistic schizophrenics.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Not a single item of the forty, it should be noted, received over the three-quarters negative vote used by Leonard to classify a usage as "illiterate." Most of the forty fall in the top half of the "disputed" scale.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Lee Smith, Jr., "The Teacher and the World of English," English Journal (April 1958), p.182.







Business GroupHypothesis 2

The number of usages identified as errors by businessmen increases significantly with a change of media from speech to letters to isolated sentences.

Table II summarizes the individual and total number of objections made by the Business Group to the forty items of usage according to their occurrence in speech, letters, and isolated sentences. Table II.A, summarizes the objections of each of the fifteen business judges. The total objections for each medium were converted to percentages, which are summarized in Figure 2.

The chi-square test for significance of differences was applied to the three totals in Table II. The differences proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 2 was therefore accepted.

The individual differences between speech-letters, speech-sentences, and letters-sentences in Table II are also significant in all cases at the 0.01 level.



TABLE II

TOTAL OBJECTIONS OF THE FIFTEEN BUSINESS JUDGES  
TO EACH USAGE ERROR IN SPEECH,  
LETTERS, AND SENTENCES

U S A G E	I T E M	S P E E C H   L E T T E R S   S E N T E N C E S		
1)	I <u>only</u> borrowed five dollars.	0	2	3
2)	This bread is different <u>than</u> that.	0	2	5
3)	She feels <u>badly</u> about it.	0	0	1
4)	The problem of <u>us</u> having to go....	1	3	8
5)	Neither John nor Bill <u>were</u> there.	0	0	2
6)	Everybody put on <u>their</u> hats.	0	0	3
7)	Neither of them <u>have</u> money.	0	0	3
8)	The chance of <u>me</u> staying...	0	8	9
9)	It looks <u>like</u> I failed.	0	2	9
10)	Who did you see?	1	2	7
11)	They will try <u>and</u> meet us.	0	3	9
12)	The toys were <u>laying</u> around.	2	7	10
13)	One of those men who <u>likes</u> ...	1	0	1
14)	Not only learn but also <u>to</u> <u>meet</u> ...	0	0	1
15)	If I <u>was</u> you, I would go.	0	1	7
16)	Did anyone forget <u>their</u> hat?	1	2	7
17)	A choice <u>between</u> three routes...	0	4	6
18)	Each of them <u>have</u> a turn.	0	6	10
19)	He died, <u>which</u> shocked us.	0	0	9
20)	I know better than <u>her</u> who left.	1	11	14
21)	There was a <u>sort of</u> agreement.	0	8	6
22)	It is between father and <u>I</u> .	0	1	5
23)	Wasn't it <u>him</u> I saw?	3	10	14
24)	His failure is <u>aggravating</u> .	0	0	2
25)	The loss has <u>gotten</u> serious.	7	9	15
26)	It is the <u>least</u> drab of the two.	0	0	4
27)	It is the <u>best</u> of the two boats.	3	2	9
28)	Everyone took <u>their</u> own books.	0	0	5
29)	I <u>contacted</u> your office.	0	0	2
30)	<u>Can</u> I ask you a question?	0	0	11
31)	It was <u>awfully</u> close.	1	12	14
32)	We met <u>lots of</u> people.	0	13	13
33)	They fell for <u>quite</u> some time.	0	0	2
34)	He was <u>proven</u> guilty.	0	0	2
35)	It was noon, <u>so</u> we had lunch.	0	0	0
36)	I <u>guess</u> we can do it.	0	0	4
37)	<u>Due to</u> illness, he failed.	0	0	3
38)	The woman fell <u>in</u> the river.	0	4	3
39)	Perhaps I <u>will</u> go.	0	0	2
40)	The reason he left was because...	0	4	4
	(Wasn't it <u>he</u> I saw?)*	(8)		
T O T A L   O B J E C T I O N S		21	116	244

\* A discussion of this usage is found on page 59.





TABLE II.A.

NUMBER OF PROTESTS MADE BY THE FIFTEEN INDIVIDUAL  
BUSINESS JUDGES TO THE FORTY ERRORS  
IN SPEECH, LETTERS, AND SENTENCES

JUDGE	SPEECH	LETTERS	SENTENCES
1	1	3	13
2	1	11	19
3	0	12	19
4	2	7	13
5	3	8	22
6	1	14	19
7	4	6	16
8	1	8	16
9	0	3	11
10	0	2	24
11	5	3	17
12	2	11	20
13	0	9	9
14	1	9	13
15	0	10	13
TOTALS	21	116	244



University GroupHypothesis 3

The number of usages identified as errors by university faculty increases significantly with a change of media from speech to letters to isolated sentences.

Table III summarizes the individual and total objections of the University Group to the forty items of usage according to their occurrence in speech, letters, and sentences. Table III.A. summarizes the reactions of each of the fifteen university judges. The total objections for each medium were converted to percentages, which are summarized in Figure 2.

The chi-square test for significance of differences was applied to the three totals in Table III. The differences proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 3 was therefore accepted.

The individual differences between speech-letters, speech-sentences, and letters-sentences in Table III are also significant in all cases at the 0.01 level.





TABLE III

TOTAL OBJECTIONS OF THE FIFTEEN UNIVERSITY  
JUDGES TO EACH USAGE ERROR IN  
SPEECH, LETTERS, AND SENTENCES

U S A G E I T E M		SPEECH	LETTER	SENTENCE
1)	I <u>only</u> borrowed five dollars.	1	4	6
2)	This bread is different <u>than</u> that.	0	4	7
3)	She feels <u>badly</u> about it.	1	0	4
4)	The problem of <u>us</u> having to go...	2	4	6
5)	Neither John nor Bill <u>were</u> here.	0	0	7
6)	Everybody put on <u>their</u> hats.	0	0	8
7)	Neither of them <u>have</u> money.	1	0	10
8)	The chance of <u>me</u> staying...	1	7	10
9)	It <u>looks like</u> I failed.	0	2	10
10)	<u>Who</u> did you see?	0	5	12
11)	They will try <u>and</u> meet us.	0	5	10
12)	The toys were <u>laying</u> around.	8	8	10
13)	One of those men who <u>likes</u> ...	1	0	4
14)	<u>Not only</u> learn but <u>also to meet</u> ...	0	0	5
15)	If I was you, I would go.	2	11	11
16)	Did anyone forget <u>their</u> hat?	0	2	11
17)	A choice <u>between</u> three routes...	0	4	7
18)	Each of them <u>have</u> a turn.	2	8	15
19)	He died, <u>which</u> shocked us.	0	0	11
20)	I know better than <u>her</u> who left.	4	12	11
21)	There was a <u>sort of</u> agreement.	1	5	4
22)	It is between father and <u>I</u> .	6	10	13
23)	Wasn't it <u>him</u> we saw?	5	11	13
24)	His failure is <u>aggravating</u> .	2	6	5
25)	The loss has <u>gotten</u> serious.	0	8	12
26)	It is the <u>least</u> drab of the two.	4	4	6
27)	It is the <u>best</u> of the two boats.	6	3	9
28)	Everyone took <u>their</u> own books.	2	3	10
29)	I <u>contacted</u> your office.	0	0	1
30)	<u>Can</u> I ask you a question?	1	0	11
31)	It was <u>awfully</u> close.	0	13	13
32)	We met <u>lots of</u> people.	1	9	12
33)	They fell for <u>quite</u> some time.	0	0	1
34)	He was <u>proven</u> guilty.	0	3	2
35)	It was noon, <u>so</u> we had lunch.	0	1	2
36)	I <u>guess</u> we can do it.	0	0	5
37)	<u>Due to</u> illness, he failed.	3	2	3
38)	The woman fell <u>in</u> the river.	1	4	8
39)	Perhaps I <u>will</u> go.	0	1	1
40)	The reason he left was because..	1	2	4
	(Wasn't it <u>he</u> I saw?)*	(12)		
T O T A L O B J E C T I O N S		56	161	310

\* A discussion of this usage is found on page 59.



TABLE III.A.

NUMBER OF PROTESTS MADE BY THE FIFTEEN INDIVIDUAL  
UNIVERSITY JUDGES TO THE FORTY ERRORS  
IN SPEECH, LETTERS, AND SENTENCES

JUDGE	SPEECH	LETTERS	SENTENCES
1	1	3	16
2	14	25	29
3	2	14	23
4	0	6	19
5	4	6	26
6	6	13	20
7	10	20	30
8	0	7	11
9	1	8	20
10	4	20	28
11	3	5	19
12	5	9	18
13	1	6	17
14	3	9	20
15	2	6	15
TOTALS	56	161	310





### English Group

#### Hypothesis 4

The number of usages identified as errors by teachers of English increases significantly with a change of media from speech to letters to isolated sentences.

Table IV summarizes the individual and total objections of the English Group to the forty items of usage according to their occurrence in speech, letters, and sentences. Table IV.A. summarizes the reactions of each of the fifteen judges in the English Group.

The total objections for each medium were converted to percentages, which are summarized in Figure 2.

The chi-square test for significance of differences was applied to the three totals in Table IV. The differences proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 4 was therefore accepted.

The individual differences between speech-letters, speech-sentences, and letters-sentences in Table IV were also significant in all cases at the 0.01 level.



TABLE IV

TOTAL OBJECTIONS OF THE FIFTEEN ENGLISH  
JUDGES TO EACH USAGE ERROR IN  
SPEECH, LETTERS, AND SENTENCES

U S A G E I T E M		S P E E C H L E T T E R S E N T E N C E		
1)	I <u>only</u> borrowed five dollars.	1	4	8
2)	This bread is different <u>than</u> that.	2	8	12
3)	She feels <u>badly</u> about it.	3	3	6
4)	The problem of <u>us</u> having to go...	5	10	13
5)	Neither John nor Bill <u>were</u> there.	6	6	14
6)	Everybody put on <u>their</u> hats.	4	2	13
7)	Neither of them <u>have</u> money.	3	5	14
8)	The chance of <u>me</u> staying...	7	10	12
9)	It looks <u>like</u> I failed.	4	7	14
10)	<u>Who</u> did you see?	1	5	9
11)	They will try <u>and</u> meet us.	1	9	13
12)	The toys were <u>laying</u> around.	11	13	14
13)	One of those men who <u>likes</u> ...	2	5	5
14)	Not only learn but also <u>to meet</u> ...	0	1	4
15)	If I <u>was</u> you, I would go.	6	10	14
16)	Did anyone forget their hat?	5	9	15
17)	A choice <u>between</u> three routes.	4	7	14
18)	Each of them <u>have</u> a turn.	7	10	14
19)	He died, <u>which</u> shocked us.	1	1	14
20)	I know better than <u>her</u> who left.	8	10	13
21)	There was a <u>sort of</u> agreement.	0	11	8
22)	It is between father and <u>I</u> .	10	12	13
23)	Wasn't it <u>him</u> we saw?	7	11	14
24)	His failure is <u>aggravating</u> .	2	5	6
25)	The loss has <u>gotten</u> serious.	8	10	12
26)	It is the <u>least</u> drab of the two.	3	7	11
27)	It is the <u>best</u> of the two boats.	7	6	13
28)	Everyone took <u>their</u> own books.	9	8	15
29)	I <u>contacted</u> your office.	0	1	1
30)	<u>Can</u> I ask you a question?	2	0	11
31)	It was <u>awfully</u> close.	3	13	12
32)	We met <u>lots of</u> people.	1	11	14
33)	They fell for <u>quite</u> some time.	1	0	3
34)	He was <u>proven</u> guilty.	0	1	2
35)	It was noon, <u>so</u> we had lunch.	0	1	5
36)	I <u>guess</u> we can do it.	1	3	9
37)	<u>Due to</u> illness, he failed.	5	5	11
38)	The woman fell <u>in</u> the river.	5	6	11
39)	Perhaps I <u>will</u> go.	0	2	2
40)	The reason he left was <u>because</u> ...	6	8	13
	(Wasn't it <u>he</u> I saw?)*	(13)		
T O T A L O B J E C T I O N S		151	256	421

\* A discussion of this usage is found on page 59.







TABLE IV.A.

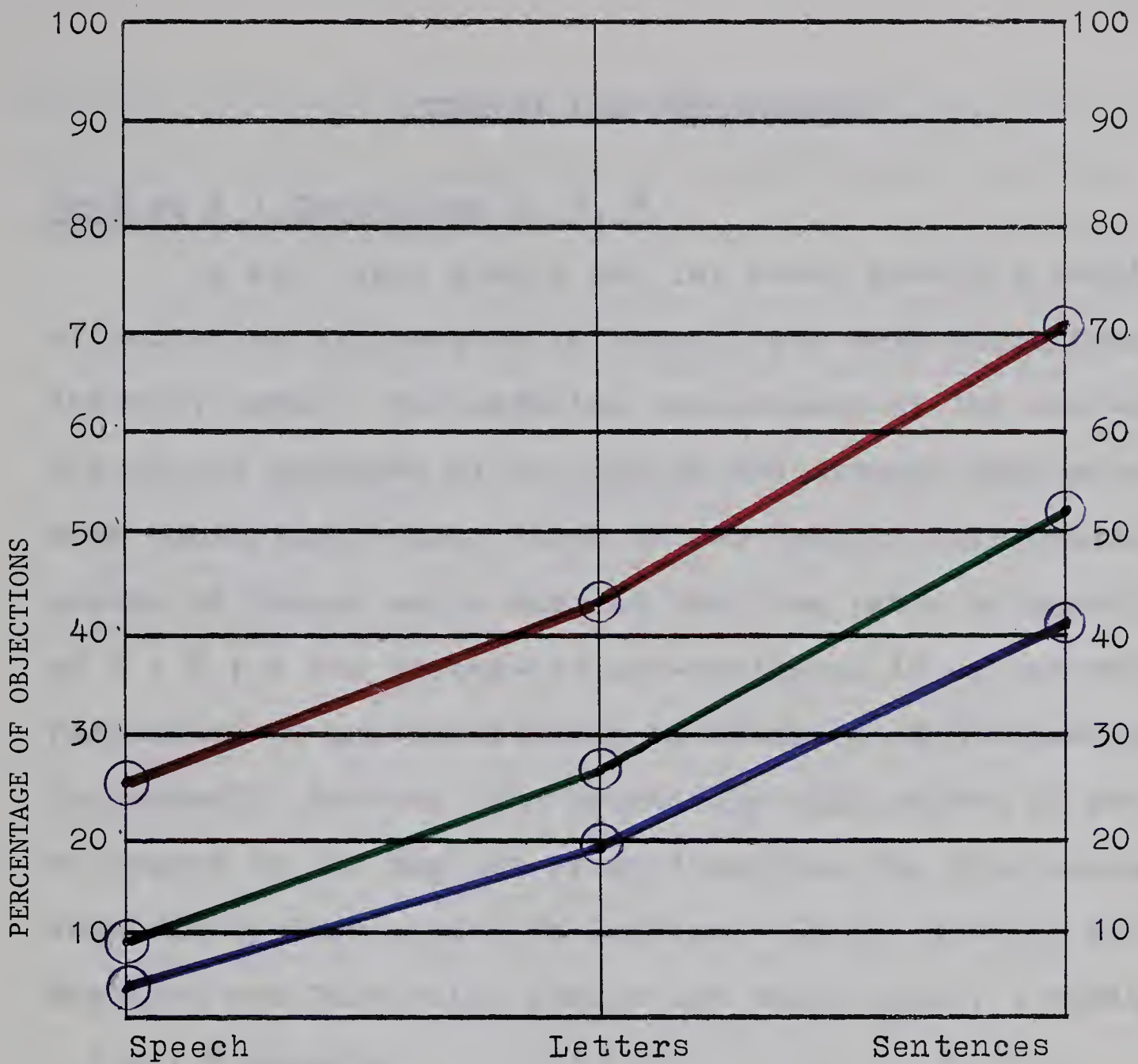
NUMBER OF PROTESTS MADE BY THE FIFTEEN INDIVIDUAL  
ENGLISH JUDGES TO THE FORTY ERRORS  
IN SPEECH, LETTERS, AND SENTENCES

JUDGE	SPEECH	LETTERS	SENTENCES
1*	20	27	31
2*	19	19	30
3*	6	12	29
4	23	26	31
5	21	27	30
6	2**	5	18
7	17	24	27
8	11	15	22
9*	10	25	32
10*	9	20	28
11	10	29	34
12*	1**	7	28
13*	12	24	34
14	0	17	24
15*	2**	3	23
TOTALS	<u>151</u>	<u>256</u>	<u>421</u>

\* High school teacher.

\*\* It is noteworthy that these three relatively low scores were registered by teachers who apologized to the investigator that they probably would not "react as they should as English teachers" because they had been influenced by the attitude toward usage of modern linguistic science.





	SPEECH*	LETTERS*	SENTENCES*
BUSINESS GROUP	21 (3.5%)	116 (19.3%)	244 (40.7%)
UNIVERSITY GROUP	56 (9.3%)	161 (26.8%)	310 (51.7%)
ENGLISH GROUP	151 (25.2%)	256 (42.7%)	421 (70.2%)

FIGURE 2

PERCENTAGE OF OBJECTIONS TO THE FORTY USAGE ERRORS  
IN SPEECH, LETTERS, AND SENTENCES MADE BY THE  
INDIVIDUAL GROUPS OF FIFTEEN JUDGES

(Figure 1, page 56, is the mean of these individual results.).

\* Each figure in the table represents the number of objections out of 600 exposures (40 usage items x 15 judges).



Concentration	Volume	Amount	Notes
100 mg/ml	100 ml	100 mg	Initial solution
50 mg/ml	200 ml	100 mg	After dilution
25 mg/ml	400 ml	100 mg	After further dilution

Figure 1

The graph shows the relationship between concentration and volume. The concentration decreases as the volume increases, which is characteristic of a dilution process.

The data points are as follows:

Concentration (mg/ml) vs. Volume (ml)



## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Problem A : Hypotheses 2, 3, 4.

In all three groups and for every possible combination of media the differences in sensitivity were significant at the 0.01 level. The striking consistency of the over-all pattern of response of the groups has already been noted. Such consistency among three rather sharply differentiated groups of judges would suggest that the ratio of sensitivity of 1 : 2 : 4 for speech-letters-sentences is an accurate reflection of the sensitivity of speakers of Standard English in general. However, the relatively high number of protests to speech by the English Group disguises the true change in sensitivity from speech to letters. If the results for the Business and University Groups are taken alone, a ratio of 1 : 4 : 8 results.

If "good speech" or "correct speech" is of importance among the executive or managerial classes in business, the results make it clear that what businessmen characterize as "bad speech" or "incorrect speech" has little relationship with the kind of usage problem used in this experiment. Figure 2 (page 69) shows an almost total lack of reaction to the spoken items. At the conclusion of the taped interview, the investigator asked members of the Business Group for their general impressions of the fluency of the college graduate and the personnel manager. None of the group were



negative. Reactions ranged from "average fluency" to "extremely fluent." Following are some typical comments, transcribed from tape :

Personally, I wouldn't have too much doubt about his ability to speak properly in that position. His choice of words and his English generally were fairly good in my mind.

I was quite impressed. I think he sounds quite mature, and expresses himself well. I would have no fears about his ability to speak to educated people. He's fluent, and seems to have a rather nice way of putting his point across. The employer sounds normal enough.

I would say he would be acceptable....Judging from this sample, he speaks quite well, with some fluency and with reasonable ease...and he gives me the impression that he would be well suited to chat with clients and customers.

Better than average speech....The consistently superior quality of this conversation in regard to grammatical correctness is better than average.

I think he's certainly average....I consider myself average in English, and I think he is too. I'd say that the personnel manager is average also.

Even in the formal business correspondence the Business Group found little to criticize (see Table II).

Twenty-eight of the forty items received three protests or less; eighteen items received none at all. Several of the Business Group objected more to wordiness and vagueness; on three occasions members of this group showed the investigator samples from their own files of what they considered badly written letters. In none of these was usage a factor.

Several members of the English Group admitted that when they detected the first two or three items in speech, they found it subsequently difficult not to listen deliberately







for more. Certain common constructions (indefinite pronoun + singular reference; conditional clause + subjunctive mood, etc.) triggered an expectant set of mind in which the English teacher "waited to see which form the speaker would use." Probably the same process was in operation while the English Group read the letters : many of the English teachers used in this study apparently could not divorce themselves from the formal standards of the textbook or literary essay.

The acceptance of hypotheses 1-4 in Problem A makes it clear that speakers of Standard English do not react statically to language stimuli. The dramatic change in sensitivity with change in medium makes suspect any survey of usage based solely on isolated sentences. Furthermore, it is additional evidence that any absolute judgments founded on a single standard about what constitutes "good" as opposed to "bad" English are unlikely to be accurate descriptions of the facts of educated usage.



## CHAPTER V

### RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

#### PROBLEM B : CHANGES IN SENSITIVITY TO USAGE ERRORS WITH CHANGES IN THE GROUPS OF JUDGES

This group of seven hypotheses was designed to answer the following question : Do all speakers of Standard English exhibit the same sensitivity to errors in usage, or are there differences in sensitivity depending on the occupational or academic background of the individual?

#### Combined Media of Presentation

##### Hypothesis 5

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of judges from businessmen to university faculty to English teachers.

Table V summarizes the total number of objections by the three groups of judges in speech, letters, and isolated sentences, as well as the total objections by each group for combined media. The total objections of each group were converted to percentages, which are summarized in Figure 3. The chi-square test for significance of differences was applied to the three totals for combined media





in Table V. The difference proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 5 was therefore accepted.

TABLE V  
TOTAL OBJECTIONS OF EACH GROUP OF FIFTEEN JUDGES  
TO THE FORTY USAGE ERRORS IN INDIVIDUAL  
MEDIA AND IN COMBINED MEDIA

	BUSINESS	UNIVERSITY	ENGLISH
Speech	21	56	151
Letters	116	161	256
Sentences	244	310	421
TOTALS FOR COMBINED MEDIA	381	527	828

Hypothesis 5.a.

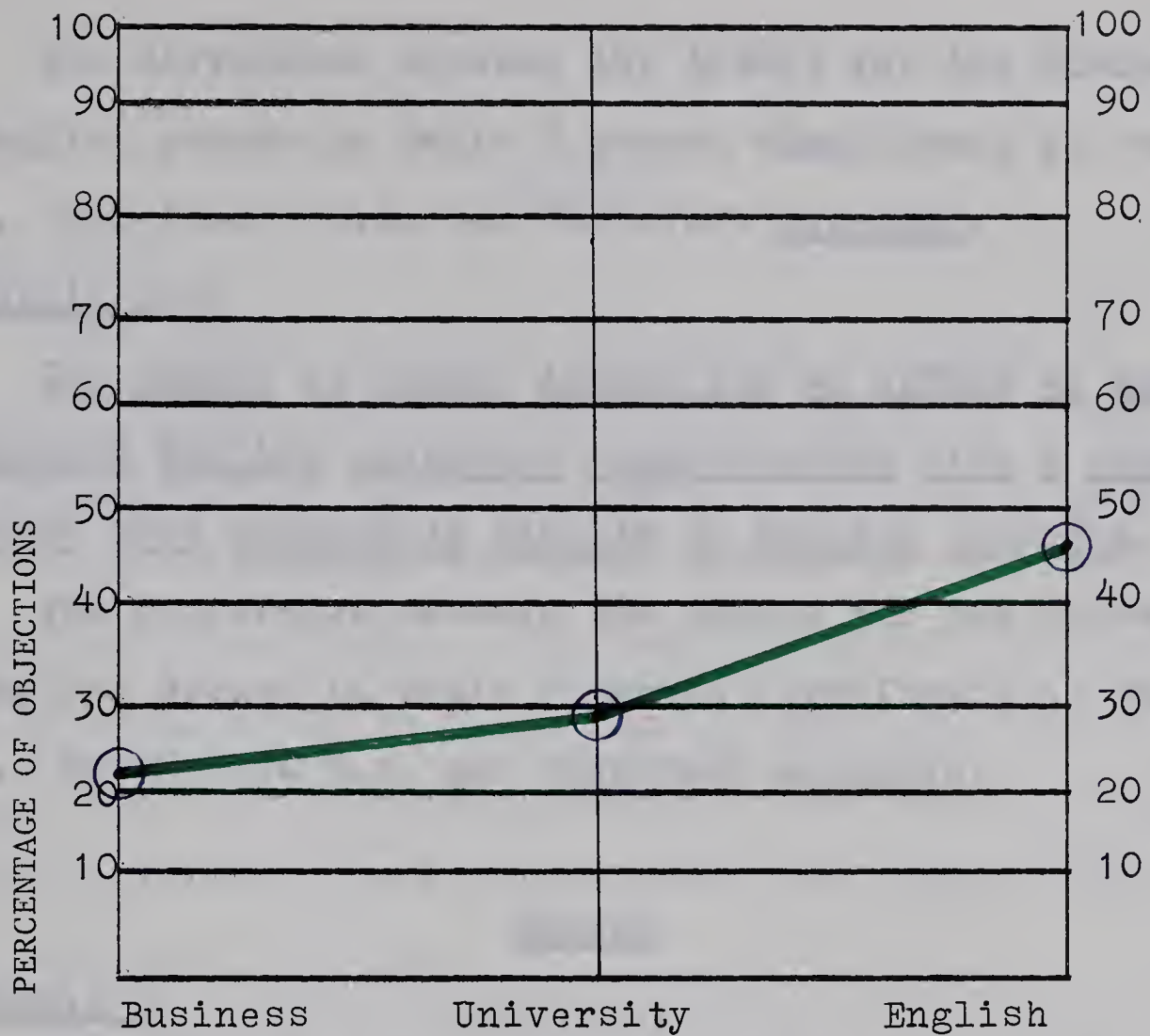
The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of judges from businessmen to university faculty.

The differences between the totals for the Business and University Groups in Table V proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 5.a. was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 5.b.

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of judges from businessmen to English teachers.





BUSINESS	381* (21.2%)
UNIVERSITY	527* (29.3%)
ENGLISH	828* (46.0%)

FIGURE 3

PERCENTAGE OF OBJECTIONS TO THE FORTY USAGE ERRORS  
MADE BY THE BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY, AND ENGLISH  
GROUPS IN THE COMBINED MEDIA OF PRESENTATION

\*Each figure in the table represents the number of objections out of 1800 exposures (40 usage items x 15 judges x 3 media).





The difference between the totals for the Business and English groups in Table V proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 5.b. was therefore accepted.

#### Hypothesis 5.c.

The number of usages identified as errors by speakers of Standard English increases significantly with a change of judges from university faculty to English teachers.

The difference between the totals for the University and English Groups in Table V proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 5.c. was therefore accepted.

### Speech

#### Hypothesis 6

The number of usages identified as errors in speech increases significantly with a change of judges from businessmen to university faculty to English teachers.

Table V contains the total objections to speech of each of the three groups. The total objections of each group were converted to percentages, which are summarized in Figure 4. The differences between the totals for speech in Table V proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 6 was therefore accepted.

The individual differences between businessmen-university faculty, businessmen-English teachers, and university faculty-English teachers in Table V also were significant at the 0.01 level.



### Letters

#### Hypothesis 7

The number of usages identified as errors in letters increases significantly with a change of judges from businessmen to university faculty to English teachers.

Table V contains the total objections to letters of each of the three groups. The total objections of each group were converted to percentages, which are summarized in Figure 4. The differences between the totals for letters in Table V proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 7 was therefore accepted.

The individual differences between businessmen-university faculty, businessmen-English teachers, and university faculty-English teachers in Table V were also significant in all cases at the 0.01 level.

### Isolated Sentences

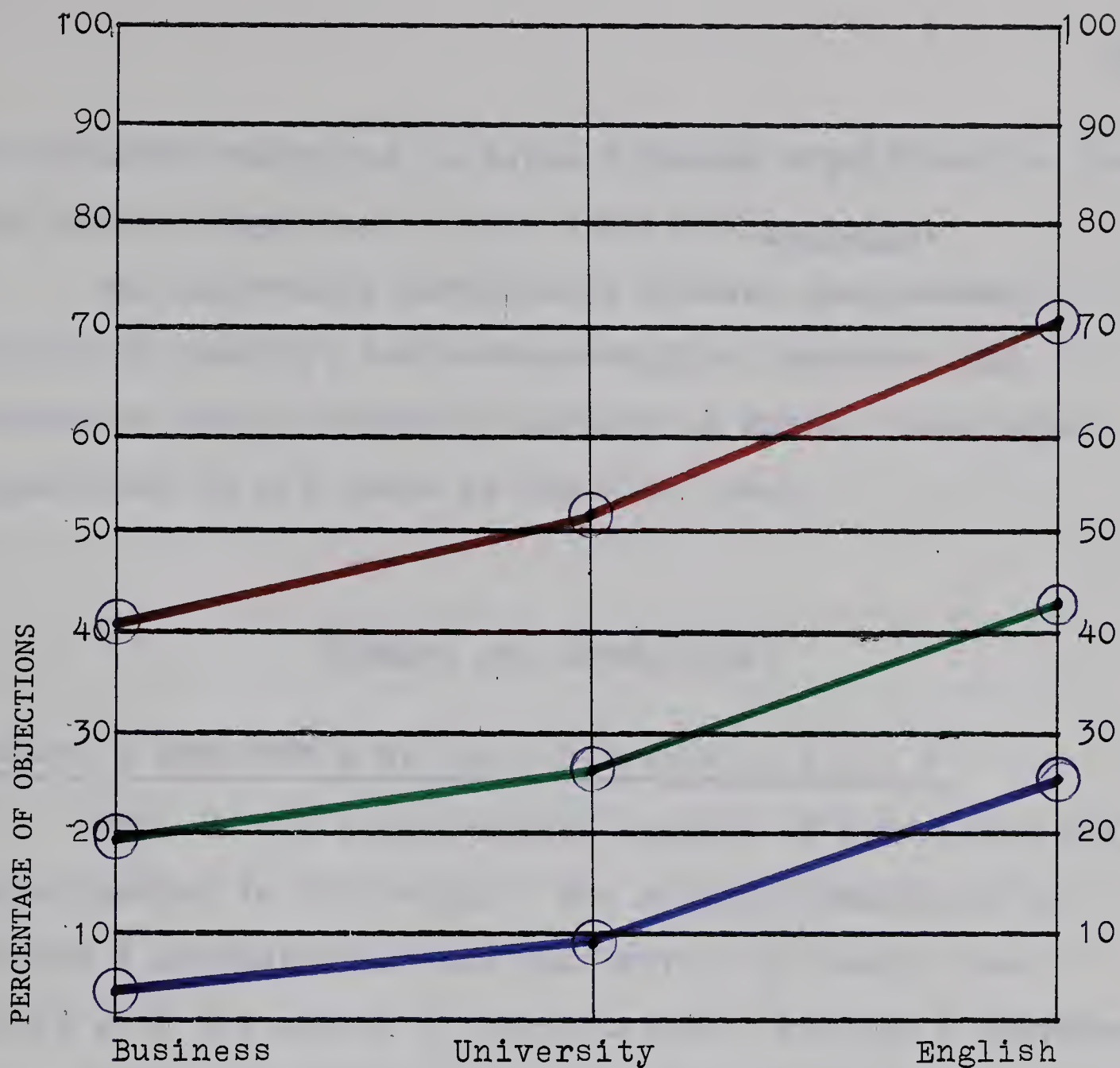
#### Hypothesis 8

The number of usages identified as errors in isolated sentences increases significantly with a change of judges from businessmen to university faculty to English teachers.

Table V contains the total objections to isolated sentences of each of the three groups. The total objections of each group were converted into percentages, which are summarized in Figure 4. The differences between the totals







	BUSINESS*	UNIVERSITY*	ENGLISH*
SPEECH	21 (3.5%)	56 (9.3%)	151 (25.2%)
LETTERS	116 (19.3%)	161 (26.8%)	256 (42.7%)
SENTENCES	244 (40.7%)	310 (51.7%)	421 (70.2%)

FIGURE 4

PERCENTAGE OF OBJECTIONS TO THE FORTY USAGE ERRORS MADE BY  
THE BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY, AND ENGLISH GROUPS  
IN THE INDIVIDUAL MEDIA OF PRESENTATION

(Figure 3, page 75, is the mean of these individual results)

\*Each figure in the table represents the number of objections out of 600 exposures (40 usage items x 15 judges).



for isolated sentences in Table V proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 8 was therefore accepted.

The individual differences between businessmen-university faculty, businessmen-English teachers, and university faculty-English teachers in Table V were also significant in all cases at the 0.01 level.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Problem B Hypotheses 5, 5.a., 5.b., 5.c., 6, 7, 8.

This is the second major sequence of hypotheses under investigation in this study. The results summarized in Problem A demonstrated that sensitivity to usage items varied with the medium of presentation. Problem B compared three distinctly different sub-sets within the set of speakers of Standard English in an effort to determine whether differences in professional occupation are paralleled by differences in sensitivity.

Figure 2 (page 69), which illustrated the rise in sensitivity, also revealed that there was no overlapping in the graphs for the individual groups, and that the relative numerical differences between the total objections for each group in each medium remained rather constant. The acceptance of all hypotheses in Problem B proved that these differences were highly significant. This lack of consensus among leaders in the business, administrative, and academic fields is surprising, and points up the diffi-





culty in selecting a sample of "educated" people for a survey of usage.

Hypotheses 5.a., 5.b., and 5.c. reveal significant differences between all groups, but the numerical and percentage totals in Table V and Figure 4 make it clear that such differences are not equal. For instance, the chi-square value obtained for the difference in 5.a. was 31.40, whereas the value obtained for the difference in 5.c. was 107.16 (with 6.63 needed for a 0.01 level of significance with 1 df). A breakdown of chi-square values for 5.a., 5.b., and 5.c., and the individual differences under 6, 7, and 8 reveals that the University Group was much closer to the Business Group than to the English Group in all cases. The various chi-square values are summarized in Table VI.

TABLE VI  
CHI-SQUARE VALUES FOR COMBINED AND INDIVIDUAL MEDIA

C O M B I N A T I O N	$\chi^2$
Business-English (Combined Media)	248.67
University-English (Combined Media)	107.16
University-Business (Combined Media)	31.40
Business-English (Speech)	114.70
University-English (Speech)	52.47
University-Business (Speech)	16.81
Business-English (Letters)	76.36
University-English (Letters)	33.11
University-Business (Letters)	9.48
Business-English (Sentences)	105.51
University-English (Sentences)	43.05
University-Business (Sentences)	14.60



If some critics protest that for purposes of a usage survey the standards of businessmen would be too lax and the standards of English teachers too strict, these results might be used to support the claim that university administrators and academic staff outside the department of English are the most reliable sources of information about Standard English. This group appears to occupy a fairly consistent middle ground between the extremes. It is noteworthy that it was this general university group that Fries for the most part used while gathering the materials for The Structure of English. Other studies of usage have paid little heed to this learned cross-section of speakers of Standard English. Leonard's sample for Current English Usage ignored them completely.<sup>1</sup>

The performance of the Business Group in this investigation contradicts the findings of Leonard, who included nineteen anonymous "businessmen" in his sample. Leonard's business group was perhaps more severe in its judgments than were most of his other judges; certainly they registered more protests than his English teachers and linguists.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The lack of agreement among the groups does not support Quirk's assumption that "a majority of people who have had a high degree of formal education and who are engaged in the professions are capable of...assessing English that they hear or read as acceptable and educated or not, and that they would reach a large measure of agreement on these assessments." See "Towards a Description of English Usage," op. cit., p.52.

<sup>2</sup> Leonard, op. cit., p.222.







## CHAPTER VI

### RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

#### PROBLEM C : RANK-ORDER CORRELATION OF OBJECTIONS TO THE ERRORS IN USAGE

This group of six hypotheses was designed to answer the following question : Do speakers of Standard English generally agree on the relative seriousness of errors in usage (a) in spite of changes in the media through which they receive the errors, and (b) in spite of differences in the personal background of the judges?

#### Changes in Media of Presentation

##### Hypothesis 9

There is a significant positive rank-order correlation between the usages identified as errors in speech and in letters by speakers of Standard English.

The rank-order of the forty items according to the number of objections in speech and in letters by the combined groups of judges is shown in Table VII. The column headed SPEECH ranks the forty items in descending order of objections in that medium. The corresponding ranks for the media of letters and sentences are found in the next two columns. After correction for ranks which were tied, the Spearman-rho



test for rank-order correlation was applied to the rank orders in Table VII. The test revealed a correlation of .574, which proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 9 was therefore accepted.

#### Hypothesis 10

There is a significant positive rank-order correlation between the usages identified as errors in speech and isolated sentences by speakers of Standard English.

The rank-order of the forty items according to the number of objections in speech and isolated sentences by the combined groups of judges is shown in Table VII. The Spearman-rho test revealed a correlation of .552, which proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 10 was therefore accepted.

#### Hypothesis 11

There is a significant positive rank-order correlation between the usages identified as errors in letters and in isolated sentences by speakers of Standard English.

The rank-order of the forty items according to the number of objections in letters and in isolated sentences by the combined groups of judges is shown in Table VII. The Spearman-rho test revealed a correlation of .602, which proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 11 was therefore accepted.





RANK-ORDER OF THE FORTY USAGE ITEMS IN EACH OF THE  
THREE MEDIA ACCORDING TO THE TOTAL OBJECTIONS  
OF THE FORTY-FIVE COMBINED JUDGES

U S A G E    I T E M	S P E E C H   L E T T E R   S E N T E N C E		
The toys were <u>laying</u> around.	1	5	7.5
It is between <u>father</u> and <u>I</u> .	2.5	10	15
It is the <u>best</u> of the two boats.	2.5	23	15
Wasn't it <u>him</u> we saw?	4.5	3.5	1
The loss has <u>gotten</u> serious.	4.5	6	3.5
I know better than <u>her</u> .	6	3.5	6
Everyone brought <u>their</u> own books.	7	8	17.5
Each of them <u>have</u> a turn.	8	23	3.5
The reason he <u>fell</u> was <u>because</u> ...	10.5	16	26.5
The chance of <u>me</u> staying...	10.5	7	15
If I <u>was</u> you, I would go.	10.5	11	12.5
<u>Due</u> <u>to</u> illness, he failed.	10.5	26	30.5
The problem of <u>us</u> having to...	13.5	12.5	20
It is the <u>least</u> drab of the two.	13.5	23	26.5
Neither John nor Bill <u>were</u> there.	16	16	24
Did anyone forget <u>their</u> hat?	16	18	10
The woman fell <u>in</u> the river.	16	27	25
She feels <u>badly</u> about it.	18	33	33
Everybody put on <u>their</u> hats.	22	28.5	22.5
Neither of them <u>have</u> money.	22	34.5	20
It looks <u>like</u> I failed.	22	23	10
One of those men who <u>likes</u> ...	22	28.5	34.5
A choice <u>between</u> three routes...	22	14	20
His failure is <u>aggravating</u> .	22	23	32
It was <u>awfully</u> close.	22	1	3.5
<u>Can</u> I ask you a question?	26	39.5	10
I <u>only</u> borrowed five dollars.	28.5	16	30.5
This bread is different <u>than</u> that.	28.5	19	22.5
<u>Who</u> did you see?	28.5	25	17.5
We met <u>lots</u> of people.	28.5	2	3.5
They will try <u>and</u> meet us.	33	12.5	12.5
He died, <u>which</u> shocked us.	33	38	7.5
There was a <u>sort</u> of agreement.	33	9	28.5
They watched for <u>quite</u> some time.	33	39.5	37.5
I <u>guess</u> we can do it.	33	33	28.5
Not only give, but also <u>to see</u> ...	38	38	34.5
I <u>contacted</u> your office.	38	38	40
He was <u>proven</u> guilty.	38	30	37.5
It was noon, <u>so</u> we had lunch.	38	34.5	36
Perhaps I <u>will</u> go.	38	33	39

<sup>1</sup> After correction for ties.



Changes in Groups of JudgesHypothesis 12

There is a significant positive rank-order correlation between the usages identified as errors in combined media by businessmen and by university faculty.

The rank-order of the forty items according to the number of objections by businessmen and by university faculty for combined media is shown in Table VIII. The column headed BUSINESS ranks the forty items in descending order of objections for that group. The corresponding ranks for the university and English groups are found in the next two columns. The Spearman-rho test revealed a correlation of .792, which proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 12 was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 13

There is a significant positive rank-order correlation between the usages identified as errors in combined media by businessmen and by English teachers.

The rank-order of the forty items according to the number of objections by businessmen and by English teachers for combined media is shown in Table VIII. The Spearman-rho test revealed a correlation of .675, which proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 13 was therefore accepted.







TABLE VIII<sup>1</sup>

RANK-ORDER OF THE FORTY USAGE ITEMS FOR COMBINED  
MEDIA ACCORDING TO THE TOTAL OBJECTIONS OF  
EACH OF THE THREE GROUPS OF JUDGES

U S A G E    I T E M	BUS.	UNIV.	ENGL.
The loss has <u>gotten</u> serious.	1	9	7.5
Wasn't it <u>him</u> we saw?	2.5	1.5	3.5
It was <u>awfully</u> close.	2.5	4.5	11.5
I know better than <u>her</u> .	4.5	3	5.5
We met <u>lots of</u> people.	4.5	8.5	15
The toys were <u>laying</u> around.	6	4.5	5.5
The chance of <u>me</u> staying...	7	10.5	9.5
Each of them <u>have</u> a turn.	8	6	5.5
There was a <u>sort of</u> agreement.	9.5	27	25.5
It is the <u>best</u> of the two boats.	9.5	10.5	15
The problem of <u>us</u> having to...	11.5	20	11.5
They will try <u>and</u> meet us.	11.5	13.5	19
It looks <u>like</u> I failed.	13.5	20	17.5
<u>Can</u> I ask you a question?	13.5	20	30.5
<u>Did</u> anyone forget <u>their</u> hat?	16	17	9.5
<u>Who</u> did you see?	16	12	28
A choice <u>between</u> three routes...	16	24	17.5
He died, <u>which</u> shocked us.	18	24	27
If I <u>was</u> you, I would go.	19.5	7	7.5
The <u>reason</u> he knew was <u>because</u> ...	19.5	30.5	13
This bread is different <u>than</u> that.	21.5	24	21
The woman fell <u>in</u> the river.	21.5	17	21
It is between father and <u>I</u> .	23	1.5	2
I <u>only</u> borrowed five dollars.	24.5	24	30.5
Everyone brought <u>their</u> own books.	24.5	13.5	3.5
It is the <u>least</u> drab of the two.	26.5	15	23.5
I <u>guess</u> we can do it.	26.5	34	30.5
Everybody put on <u>their</u> hats.	29	28.5	25.5
Neither of them <u>have</u> money.	29	24	21
<u>Due to</u> illness, he failed.	29	28.5	23.5
Neither John nor Bill <u>were</u> there.	34	30.5	15
One of those men who <u>likes</u> trout...	34	34	33.5
His failure is <u>aggravating</u> .	34	17	30.5
I <u>contacted</u> your office.	34	39.5	40
They watched for <u>quite</u> some time.	34	39.5	37.5
He was <u>proven</u> guilty.	34	34	39
Perhaps I <u>will</u> go.	34	38	37.5
She feels <u>badly</u> about it.	38.5	34	33.5
Not only give but also <u>to see</u> ...	38.5	34	36
It was noon, <u>so</u> we had lunch.	40	37	35

<sup>1</sup> After correction for ties.



#### Hypothesis 14

There is a significant positive rank-order correlation between the usages identified as errors in combined media by university faculty and by English teachers.

The rank-order of the forty items according to the number of objections by university faculty and by English teachers for combined media is shown in Table VIII. The Spearman-rho test revealed a correlation of .794, which proved significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 14 was therefore accepted.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Problem C : Hypotheses 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

The results of the investigation into Problem A indicated consistent change in sensitivity to English usage with a change in the medium of communication from speech to letters to isolated sentences. The results of the investigation into Problem B revealed a significant difference in the sensitivity to usage of the three groups of educated speakers used in this investigation. The acceptance of all of the hypotheses under Problem C, on the other hand, demonstrates that there is a fair degree of consensus among the groups about the standing of individual items on a general scale of respectability.







Perhaps one of the most valuable uses of a tripartite test like that employed in the present investigation is that the triple exposure of each item enables the investigator to compare the standing of an item for each of the media, and then to arrive at a mean rank-order for the items by combined media of presentation and combined groups of judges.

Table IX below is a mean rank-order listing of the forty usage items employed in the present investigation. This order of acceptability from 1 (most total objections) to 40 (least total objections) provides a practical guide for English teachers, who need to know what usage items merit the most classroom attention, and which items may be given only minimal treatment or ignored altogether.

Furthermore, three rank-orders for each item according to individual media show a teacher instantly whether an item has low acceptability in any situation, or whether an item has low acceptability only in writing. Table VII, for instance, reveals that in spite of their low total acceptability, the expressions "lots of" and "awfully" seemed perfectly natural in speech to most of the judges. Empirical evidence of this sort should give the teacher more confidence when making judgments about usage, and should discourage him from the unrealistic proscription of common usage.

One of the dangers of using rank-order lists of this kind should be pointed out. If a teacher used Table IX, for example, as a guide to the most flagrant abuses of



TABLE IX

RANK-ORDER OF THE FORTY USAGE ITEMS  
ACCORDING TO TOTAL OBJECTIONS  
BY ALL GROUPS IN ALL MEDIA

<u>RANK</u>	<u>USAGE ITEM</u>
1	Was it <u>him</u> who made the speech?
2	I know better than <u>her</u> who left.
3	The toys were <u>laying</u> around.
4	The loss has <u>gotten</u> serious.
5	It was <u>awfully</u> close.
6	We met <u>lots of</u> people.
7	Each of them <u>have</u> a turn.
8	It is between father and <u>I</u> .
9	The chance of <u>me</u> staying...
10	If I <u>was</u> you, <u>I</u> would go.
11	It is the <u>best</u> of the two boats.
12	Did anyone forget <u>their</u> hat?
13	Everyone brought <u>their</u> own books.
14	The problem of <u>us</u> having to....
15	They will try <u>and</u> meet us.
16	It looks <u>like</u> I failed.
17	A choice <u>between</u> three routes...
18	There was a <u>sort of</u> agreement.
19	The reason he tried was <u>because</u> ...
20	<u>Who</u> did you see?
21	The woman fell <u>in</u> the river.
22	This bread is different <u>than</u> that.
23	It is the <u>least</u> drab of the two.
24	<u>Can</u> I ask you a question?
25	Neither of them <u>have</u> money.
26	He died, <u>which</u> shocked us.
27	Neither John nor Bill <u>were</u> there.
28	<u>Due to</u> illness, he failed.
29	Everybody put on <u>their</u> hats.
30	I <u>only</u> borrowed five dollars.
31	His failure is <u>aggravating</u> .
32	I <u>guess</u> we can do it.
33	She feels <u>badly</u> about it.
34	One of those men who <u>likes</u> trout...
35	Not only give but also <u>to see</u> ...
36	He was <u>proven</u> guilty.
37	It was noon, <u>so</u> we had lunch.
38	Perhaps I <u>will</u> go.
39	They watched for <u>quite</u> some time.
40	I <u>contacted</u> your office.







English usage in the eyes of educated people, and thus drilled intensively on, say, the top twenty items, he might still be wasting classroom time on inconsequential matters. It was pointed out in the discussion of Hypotheses 1-1.c. that none of the usages in this investigation received even close to the seventy-five percent rejection demanded by the Leonard study for classification as "illiterate" or "uncultivated." For example, the most protested item, "was him," was accepted in semi-formal speech by two-thirds of the judges. There is a danger that teachers may leap to unwarranted conclusions about usage standards if they were given rank-order lists without accompanying commentary and qualifications. Unfortunately, courses of study emanating from provincial departments of education frequently list usage items "to be given special attention" without specifying the media of communication or the social occasion in which the usage is objectionable.



## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

#### I SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to investigate three problems:

(a) whether speakers of Standard English are equally sensitive to usage errors regardless of whether they hear the errors, read them in letters, or read them in isolated sentences;

(b) whether the professional or academic background of a speaker of Standard English has any bearing on his sensitivity to usage errors;

(c) whether speakers of Standard English in different occupations and professions tend to agree on the relative seriousness of a specific usage error.

The method of investigation was to embed forty textbook errors in usage in the three contexts of speech, letters, and isolated sentences. These media were then presented to forty-five members of the business and academic communities in Edmonton, Alberta. The judges were asked to object to any items of usage that they found offensive or inappropriate.





The purpose of the investigation was to determine whether changes in the media of presentation or in the occupational background of the judges made any significant difference in the number and kind of usage items identified as errors.

A. The results supported the hypothesis that speakers of Standard English are not equally sensitive to disputed usage in different contexts. The judges objected to twice as many items in letters as they did in speech, and four times more in isolated sentences than in speech.

B. The results supported the hypothesis that the occupational or academic background of a speaker of Standard English has a bearing on his sensitivity to disputed usage. University professors and administrators objected to more items than did business executives, while teachers of English in high school and university were far more sensitive to usage in any context than were the other groups.

C. The results supported the hypothesis that speakers of Standard English tend to agree on the ranking of usage items on a scale from most objectionable to least objectionable.<sup>1</sup> In spite of changes in the groups of judges, and regardless of the context in which the item was found, there was a significant rank-order correlation of disputed usages according to total objections.

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<sup>1</sup> The term "most objectionable" refers only to the item's status relevant to the other thirty-nine items in this study, and should not be misconstrued as a description of the item's general status among speakers of Standard English.



## II CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are the major conclusions drawn from the results of the investigation, together with their implications (a) for curriculum and instruction in English education, and (b) for descriptive linguistics.

A. The findings reported in Chapter IV indicate that speakers of Standard English are by no means static in their reaction to language. They are particularly insensitive to spoken errors in usage, most of which are either accepted or unnoticed. Sensitivity to usage errors in the context of letters is greater than it is in speech, but is still much lower than has generally been assumed. Speakers of Standard English object frequently only when a meaningful context is removed, and the errors are presented in isolated sentences.

### Recommendations

The considerable shift in sensitivity to usage with a shift in medium is further evidence of the importance of dealing with Standard English in the classroom in terms of several "functional varieties."<sup>1</sup> Teachers should avoid absolute judgments about "good" and "bad" English based solely on a literary level of usage appropriate mainly in

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<sup>1</sup> Functional varieties are most clearly discussed in John S. Kenyon, "Cultural Levels and Functional Varieties of English," College English (October 1948), pp.31-36.







essay writing at the university level. The writers of language textbooks should also guard against unqualified judgments on points of usage for which there appears to be a certain amount of free variation among speakers of Standard English.

The relatively low sensitivity to errors in speech and letters as compared to sensitivity in isolated sentences indicates that people react to language much differently when they meet it in familiar, natural contexts as opposed to the more unfamiliar and artificial context of a single written sentence. In the textbooks examined for purposes of this study, however, most of the usage drill consists of work with isolated sentences. The results of the investigation suggest that such drill probably results in little transfer to normal speech and writing. Thus in the case of usage problems in which the choice of expression appears to be a matter of selecting an appropriate functional variety of Standard English, and is not clearly a matter of cultural levels, the teacher should abandon drill on isolated sentences and deal with each usage only as it arises in the natural speech or writing of the students. Writers of language textbooks should also omit isolated sentence drills on all usage items except those that are incontrovertibly nonstandard.

Finally, the lack of reaction of speakers of Standard English to many spoken and written locutions condemned or severely restricted in use by textbooks and examinations



in Canada indicates that a careful reappraisal of the language curriculum should be undertaken with a view to eliminating or de-emphasizing any items that appear to be of little or no consequence to educated people.

B. The sharp increase in sensitivity to disputed usage in the context of isolated sentences indicates that a survey of usage standards based on lists of sentences would result in a very conservative description of the attitudes of speakers of Standard English.

#### Recommendation

Any survey of the opinions of educated Canadians about points of disputed usage should be supplemented by an investigation of their sensitivity to such usages in an extended context, preferably both spoken and written. Such a procedure would make possible the construction of charts and the treatment of data demonstrated in Appendix G.

C. The findings reported in Chapter V indicate that the standards of English teachers are much more conservative than those of other influential groups in the society. Even if it is admitted that some degree of conservatism is desirable in the classroom, the isolation of the English Group from the University and Business Groups is rather extreme.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. page 97 (footnote).







## Recommendations

Many English teachers in the public schools and universities might profit from an honest re-assessment of their standards and attitudes in questions of usage. They should become familiar with the professional literature of the past forty years, which has pleaded for a more realistic approach to usage in the schools, and for less repression and criticism in matters of language. They should become more conversant with the descriptive approach to usage, and with the most reliable data available on the status of commonly disputed usages among speakers of Standard English. English teachers might also make greater efforts to read and listen more widely in a deliberate effort to gather their own evidence concerning usage, particularly in the mass media.

Institutions charged with the academic and professional training of teachers might also make more stringent efforts to guarantee that teachers of English in the public schools and universities are given sufficient training in the history, principles, and structure of the English language.<sup>1</sup> If course work in language is not adequate in the departments of English and Linguistics, then English educators should make it clear that additional academic offerings are necessary to meet the needs of the public schools. Experienced teachers whose

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<sup>1</sup> The need for more thorough training of English teachers is most extensively discussed in Alfred H. Grommon, ed., The Education of Teachers of English (New York : Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963). The scant linguistic background of teachers in Canada is summarized in Jack R. Cameron, "The Linguistic Training of Canadian Teachers," Alberta Journal of Educational Research (June 1965), pp. 108-10.





linguistic training is insufficient should be given more opportunity to enrich their background and become acquainted with new instructional techniques. Sustained programs of in-service training, supplemented by frequent curriculum bulletins and guides from the provincial Departments of Education, are the most immediate need. Furthermore, until such general re-training of the teaching force has been achieved, all questions on specific items of disputed usage should be eliminated from official government examinations.

C. The performance of the Business Group in the experiment, and their comments recorded in Appendix E, make it clear that what the business world and public service consider "good" English has little to do with disputed points of usage similar to those used in this study.<sup>1</sup> Failure to

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<sup>1</sup> The favorable remarks of the Business Group, included in Appendix E, on the language used in the taped interview should be compared to the following comments on the same material by two English teachers: "I would rather think that the college graduate certainly has errors in English that would dismay me, but since he is a major in history and economics, I'm sure this does happen....With the number of errors he had in his oral language, I wouldn't want him trying to sell my books to educated people -- door to door salesman, fine, but not going in to meet other educated people. I think that he would be a weak representative." "They're both using the kind of grammar that is generally accepted by structural linguists these days, and liberal grammarians, but this bothers me....I would warn a student going into that situation that he should be rather more guarded about his language than the young man on the tape was....They would probably seriously damage his chances. He would need to be more precise than that."





master the majority of such usages apparently will have little effect on the young person's chances of acquiring and holding a position with business or government.

#### Recommendation

Those in charge of the English program should determine whether teachers, textbooks, courses of study, and examinations are placing undue stress on disputed usages at the expense of linguistic training considered more vital by the managerial classes. Rather than usage problems, the Business Group stressed organization of ideas, brevity of statement, clarity of vocabulary and sentence structure, and tact and alertness in all language activities.

D. The sharp increase in sensitivity to disputed usage among teachers of English indicates that a survey of usage standards which relied heavily on such a group of informants would result in a very conservative description of the attitudes of speakers of Standard English.

#### Recommendation

Any survey of the opinions of educated Canadians about points of disputed usage should be careful to ensure that the sample of informants is a valid cross-section of speakers of Standard English in the country, and that it is not too heavily weighted in favor of a single occupational, professional, or academic group.



### III SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

During the past decade there has been a good deal of interest in the English language in Canada. However, extensive empirical research into the linguistic practices of Canadians is scant.<sup>1</sup> In matters of disputed usage, English teachers and textbook writers in this country are often at a loss whether to follow American or British practice :

There is in Canada a great deal of interest in language....But this interest in language gets little nourishment from solid linguistic information. We have no Linguistic Atlas, very little knowledge of Canadian dialects, and a confused and ambivalent double culture in language -- sandwiched as it is between the prestige of British usage and the ever present American influence.

One of the major purposes of this investigation was to discover more effective techniques for establishing Standard English usage, and particularly the status of disputed usage among Canadians. The findings show that surveys of opinion based on isolated sentences would be unsatisfactory, and that no single group of people should be given undue weight in the sample of speakers selected as judges.

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Avis, A Bibliography of Writings on Canadian English (1857-1965) (Toronto : Gage, 1965).

<sup>2</sup> Philip G. Penner, "Language Teaching in Canadian Secondary Schools," A Common Purpose (Champaign, Illinois : National Council of Teachers of English, 1965), p.70.







Further pilot studies should be undertaken, using a test instrument similar to that of the present investigation, among other groups of speakers of Standard English in various parts of Canada, including clergymen, lawyers, doctors, professional writers, and editors. When the sensitivity of the various groups to usage in different contexts had been determined, the investigator would be in a position to select a survey sample truly representative of speakers of Standard English in Canada.

A survey should then be undertaken into the status in educated Canadian speech and writing of the most common items of disputed usage; furthermore, this survey of practice should be supplemented by an investigation of the sensitivity of Canadians to the same usages, perhaps employing an instrument similar to that devised for the present study. Only in this way will linguists and English educators produce sufficient evidence to guide the authors of textbooks, curriculum planners, and teachers in their handling of usage problems for the purposes of classroom instruction.

As part of this survey of usage linguists and English educators might undertake a close and prolonged study of the language of television, which offers a virtually untapped corpus of all of the functional varieties of Standard English. The combined broadcasting of the CBC and CTV networks provides a rich sample of the language as it is used in a wide variety of formal and spontaneous situations by Canadians



today. The cheapness and availability of tape recorders make it possible to gather hundreds of hours of speech upon which to base judgments about usage and other linguistic phenomena for the purpose of building a realistic and dynamic English program. There is a splendid opportunity for some Canadian university to initiate such research by undertaking the role of "listening post," using both faculty and graduate students in a joint investigation.





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APPENDIX A

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the report of the committee on the subject of the proposed amendment to the constitution of the State of New York. The names are given in alphabetical order of the surnames. The names of the persons who have been named in the report of the committee on the subject of the proposed amendment to the constitution of the State of New York are given in alphabetical order of the surnames. The names of the persons who have been named in the report of the committee on the subject of the proposed amendment to the constitution of the State of New York are given in alphabetical order of the surnames.

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A P P E N D I X A

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the report of the committee on the subject of the proposed amendment to the constitution of the State of New York. The names are given in alphabetical order of the surnames. The names of the persons who have been named in the report of the committee on the subject of the proposed amendment to the constitution of the State of New York are given in alphabetical order of the surnames.

T H E T E S T I N S T R U M E N T

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the report of the committee on the subject of the proposed amendment to the constitution of the State of New York. The names are given in alphabetical order of the surnames. The names of the persons who have been named in the report of the committee on the subject of the proposed amendment to the constitution of the State of New York are given in alphabetical order of the surnames.

APPENDIX B

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

This experiment is designed to test the reaction of people to some of the language that they might hear and read in the course of a normal day's work. You should understand that the experiment is in no sense a "test" of your knowledge of the English language. I am interested only in your spontaneous reaction to speech and writing. If you have any criticisms to make of the language that you are going to hear and read, you might only say, "I don't like that," or "That bothers me somehow," etc. If you wish to go into more detail in your objections, your remarks will be welcome, but explanation is not required.

I realize that any experimental situation is artificial, but I would ask that you attempt to read and listen to the samples of language in as natural a manner as possible. That is, you should not read or listen with more attention than you would under normal circumstances.

The experiment is composed of three sections :

- 1) A tape-recorded interview - conversation.
- 2) A selection of business correspondence.
- 3) A list of sentences.

Do you have any questions?

## D I R E C T I O N S   F O R   L I S T E N I N G

The first section of the experiment is a tape-recording of a simulated interview between a young college graduate seeking employment and the personnel manager of a book publishing firm in Western Canada. The young man enters the manager's office, and is greeted by the words, "Good morning, Mr. Smith, sorry to have kept you waiting." The manager then calls to his secretary for Smith's file, and the interview continues.

While you listen to the interview (which lasts about seven minutes), ring the bell if you wish to make any comments. I will pause the tape, and your comments will be recorded on the other machine. Your recorded comments will be considered confidential, and will be erased after I have made my analysis.





Try to listen to the interview as naturally as possible. If any of the language used by either of the speakers bothers you, or makes you in any way critical of their use of language, please ring the bell. You should interrupt if anything you hear does not seem entirely appropriate to the interview situation. No explanation for your objection is necessary unless you wish to give it.

Do you have any questions?

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TRANSCRIPTION OF THE TAPED INTERVIEW<sup>1</sup>

E - Employer  
C - Candidate

E Good morning, Mr. Smith. Sorry to have kept you waiting, but some interviews take longer than I expect.

C That's quite all right, sir.

E Miss Hawkins, do you have Mr. Smith's file there?.....  
Thank you.....John Charles Smith. Do you usually use John, or Jack?

C Well, almost always Jack. I use John on business letters and applications forms -- things of that kind.

E Fine. I notice that you were born in Vancouver, Jack. How long have you lived in Alberta?

C My family's only been here for two years. My father works for Continental Oil. He was transferred to Edmonton.

E I imagine you find the prairies quite a bit different than the coast.

C Yes, I suppose all the family does. We felt badly at first about us having to move away from our old home and friends. We'd been living in the same house for...eighteen years. I think the biggest change I noticed was that neither the climate nor the landscape were at all like I'd been used to in British Columbia.....Dad and I enjoy the prairie duck shooting, and all the family likes ice-skating, but I sometimes miss the mountains and the salt water. But I suppose everybody is biased in favor of the country they grew up in.

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<sup>1</sup> The forty usage items are underlined.





- E I'm sure you're right about that. My wife and I have both spent all our lives in Alberta, and except for visits, neither of us have lived for any length of time on the coast. Some of my prairie friends who've moved to British Columbia tell me they miss the wide-open spaces...(chuckle)...They say they feel as if the mountains are closing in on them!.....How do you like the University of Alberta, Jack?
- C Oh, just fine, Mr. Simpson. When the family moved, my parents and I considered the possibility of me staying on at the University of British Columbia and finishing my degree, but we decided against it. I felt I could work better if I was staying at home. And of course the additional cost of another year on the coast was also a factor.
- E It looks to me like you made a wise decision, Jack. Your record at Alberta is very good.
- C Thank you.
- E Your majors are...history and economics. Who did you take the course in Marketing Theory from?
- C From Professor Sandford.
- E O-o-oh yes...Wasn't that he I saw on television the other evening?....Speaking on...the future of Alberta industry?
- C Yes, that was he.
- E I liked his optimism about the economic potential of Western Canada. I hope he's right. For one thing, our company has decided to expand its operations in the west on the basis of estimated population growth. We hope to try and establish ourselves well ahead of time. That's why we're looking for young men and women who are interested in making their careers in the Canadian West. We've ~~never~~ believed in laying around waiting for other companies to take the initiative....Why are you interested in the publishing business, Jack?
- C Well, Mr. Simpson....I'd expected you to ask me that question, but I'm afraid I don't have any very original answer. I suppose I've always been one of these people who likes nothing better than reading books and talking about them. And working as a publisher's representative would not only give me a chance to travel, but also to meet interesting people.





- E What about continuing your education, Jack? If I was a young man with a record as good as yours, I think I would be seriously considering graduate school. I would have imagined that anyone with first-class undergraduate marks would want to try their hand at a Master's or Doctor's degree.
- C The truth of the matter is that I think I need some practical experience in the business world if any further study of economic theory is to be really meaningful. Thinking about my future, I've had to make a choice between three possible careers : in the civil service, at a university, or in business. Each of them have special advantages, but right now I'm most attracted to business.
- E You've never seriously considered teaching?
- C Not really, although of course I've had to give it a good deal of thought. My mother used to be a teacher, and my sister teaches in Kamloops, which is probably why they both encouraged me to take teacher-training. My mother in particular. But I simply had to tell her that I thought I knew better than her where my real interests lay.
- E How does your father feel about it?
- C Oh, he's never tried to influence me one way or the other. There's always been a sort of unwritten agreement between Dad and I that he'd let me make my own decision about what to do when I finished university. As a matter of fact, it was him who suggested that I come in and have a talk with you.
- E The reason I ask about teaching, Jack, is because we've had a certain amount of trouble both in the east and on the prairies with young people out of college who stay in the business for a year or two, and then give the whole thing up and head for the classroom. Naturally, it's a bit aggravating at times....after we've spent a good deal of time and money on training programs. This drain of personnel has gotten so serious that we've decided to be much more careful than we have in the past about hiring and training people who might be only casually interested in the publishing business.
- C Well, Mr. Simpson, I certainly understand your problem. Of course, I couldn't guarantee that my mind wouldn't change sometime in the future, but of the two main choices -- business and teaching -- right now teaching has the least appeal for me, and business seems the best of the two for someone with my interests.





- E That's fine....And of course I wouldn't want you to misunderstand me about this. We recognize that it's <sup>mind</sup> everyone's right to change their if they're not happy in a business. My point is that we're trying to contact young people who will look on bookselling as something more than just a time-filler until something better comes along...I think you understand.
- C Mr. Simpson.....I wonder if I can ask you a question at this point.....Perhaps I appear awfully naive about this, but there is one thing that concerns me about working in the publishing business. As you can see, most of my background has been in history and economics ...yet I assume that I would have to promote and discuss books in other areas, such as English and Science. How much would I be expected to know about publications outside my own field?
- E Well, Jack, I think I can honestly say that you may put your mind at rest on that score. We hire lots of young college graduates whose academic background is no broader than your own. For quite some time we've conducted rather extensive surveys that have proven to our satisfaction that potential purchasers of scholarly works or textbooks don't assume that our representatives have a technical grasp of content. They expect to read the book and make up their own minds, so there would be no responsibility of that kind on your shoulders.
- C That makes me feel better. I guess I've been mainly worried about meeting university professors in a professional capacity rather than as a student. Due to large classes, most students like myself never get to know their professors -- there always seemed to be a wide social and intellectual gulf between them and me.
- E Well, if it's any consolation, Jack, I can assure you that almost all of the graduates that we interview express the same concern. It's natural enough...but you'll find that when you walk in a university professor's office, he'll look on you as a general public relations man...(chuckle)...I think you'll find that a publisher's representative spends half his time in simply writing up orders for complimentary copies of new textbooks!....In any case, in a moment I will outline more fully some of the positions that we expect to offer in Western Canada in the next month or so.... But first I'd like to give you an idea of the general organization of the company.....We have our headquarters in Toronto, with major branch offices in.....(FADE)





## D I R E C T I O N S   F O R   R E A D I N G

The following samples of writing are designed to represent the various kinds of material that might come across the desk of a businessman. In most cases the subject matter probably has no connection with your particular business or professional interests, but you are asked to read each item as if it actually had been addressed to you. It is the appropriateness of the language that is important, not the subject matter.

Read each sample through once so that you have a grasp of the main idea. Then read the sample a second time. During your second reading, underline any words or phrases that would have seemed inappropriate to you if you had met the material in normal circumstances and had read it at normal speed.

To deserve an underline, the expression should make you slightly critical of the language ability of the writer. It is not necessary for you to give any reason for your negative reactions, but any comments you care to make later will be welcomed.

Read the material as naturally as possible -- that is, with the same speed and attention that you might employ in the course of a normal working day.

PLEASE DO NOT READ ANY SENTENCE MORE THAN TWICE.

Do you have any questions?

W E S T   C O A S T   D E V E L O P M E N T S

1056 Powell Street

Vancouver   B.C.

May 21, 1966

Mr. C.I. Williams,  
Continental Enterprises,  
10233 Jasper Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Mr. Williams:

Thank you for your letter of May 14 inviting Mr. Charles Simpson and me to be guests on your tour of the Lake Athabasca area during the week of June 20-25.



We are delighted to accept your kind offer. Neither Mr. Simpson nor I have ever visited the Athabasca country, although we have followed your northern developments with considerable interest.

You inquired about the possibility of us arriving in Edmonton a day or two before departure so that we might be more thoroughly briefed on the Athabasca operations. If our commitments here permit, we will try and arrive on June 18. We will notify you of the exact date within a few days.

Your letter stated that everyone involved in the trip would be asked to supply their own waterproof clothing and boots. Does this apply to bedding as well, or are there fully equipped accommodations at the camp? We also note that we are only allowed thirty pounds of personal effects on the aircraft -- does this figure include the special rainwear?

Once again may I thank you for your kind invitation to Mr. Simpson and I. We look forward to visiting the site of your new explorations. No doubt the country is far different than the kind we have been used to in our coastal operations.

Yours cordially,

Frank L. Shields,  
Development Director.

---

EDMONTON MARINE SUPPLIES LIMITED

11056 - 112 Avenue

Edmonton, Alberta

July 22, 1966

Mr. John Sparks,  
11220 University Drive,  
Calgary, Alberta.

Dear Mr. Sparks:

Thank you for your letter of July 3 inquiring about used boats in the runabout class listed for sale with our firm.







I regret to say that due to the lateness of the season, there is a very limited selection in the popular models you mentioned. I have contacted our branch offices in Red Deer and Grand Prairie, but neither of them report any used runabouts left in stock. However, our inventory here in Edmonton would allow you a choice between the three boats described below:

- 1) A 14' "Trueline" fiberglass runabout, with padded red vinyl seats and tinted windshield. Three years old. Excellent condition. \$650.
- 2) A 14' "Starcraft" aluminum runabout, with airtight safety tanks. Steering wheel and controls. Two years old. \$325.
- 3) A 16' "Tiger Cat" fiberglass catamaran. Equipped with padded blue vinyl seats, tinted windshield, full controls. One year old. Perfect condition. \$900.

The aluminum runabout has no padded seats, which may make it unsuitable for your needs. However, it is a very fast, safe boat. The catamaran is the best of the two fiberglass boats insofar as speed and equipment are concerned, but the price is somewhat higher than the range quoted in your letter.

I suggest that if you are interested in looking at any of these boats, or if there is any further information you require, you should call me collect as soon as possible. I regret that I am not able to offer you a more extensive choice.

Yours very truly,

Charles T. Nelson,  
Manager.

---

## M I L M O S S   M O T O R S

### MEMORANDUM

Date : July 10, 1966  
 To : Bill Goodman - Used Car Sales  
 From : Steve Charlesworth - Assistant General Manager

Dear Bill:

How were the holidays? We received your card describing the fishing. I hope that you are not one of these





people who gloats over the three-pounders back at the office --- it was painful enough just reading about your taking a limit before breakfast! All the staff felt rather badly that they weren't there to help you fry up the catch.

I called your office this morning, but you were out. Now I must drive to Calgary overnight, so that I shall not see you until tomorrow afternoon. In the meantime, this note will bring you up to date on developments of the past few days.

Unless the rail strike ties transportation up completely, it looks like the first 1967 models will be arriving about the middle of September. This means that everybody connected with used car sales at all Edmonton branches will have to meet fairly soon and be ready to report on their current inventories. I received a memo today from Mr. Milmoss, who sounds a little aggravated that nothing has been done as yet. About this time every year he gets sort of worried if he thinks that there are large numbers of used cars laying around the lots a couple of months before the new models arrive.

In any case, I guess that you know better than him whether we are going to have any problems once the trades on the new models start coming in. I have not been to see him yet, because I saw no point in me saying anything until I had consulted you. Would you be free for a meeting in the board room Thursday evening at 7:30? If your sales staff were also agreeable to that time, it would not only give them a chance to discuss a major summer promotion, but also to be briefed more fully on the 1967 models.

There are three other matters that I would like to discuss with you at the same time:

1) Who do you plan to put in charge of the Capilano lot while Sam Macdonald is in hospital? Probably he will be away for quite some time -- at least a month.

2) Do you have anyone on your staff whose potential merits sending them on a three-day sales course at Banff late in August? What about Vince Hunter -- wasn't it him who made the original suggestion about reorganizing our Southside Branch?





3) How do you feel about the two properties in Jasper Place that we have been offered for possible expansion? Both are big enough, but I think the 156th. Street property has the least potential of the two. I would like to know what you think, because we have to make a decision within a week,

If Thursday is not convenient for a meeting, how about Friday evening?

Steve.

# P I N E   P A S S   L O D G E

Box 156  
Jasper Alberta

Mr. Philip Stanton,  
10030 University Drive,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Mr. Stanton:

Thank you for your letter of April 27, inquiring about summer accommodation and rates at Pine Pass Lodge.

You suggested that there would be three in your party. As you will note in the enclosed brochure, only double or single rooms are available in the main lodge. I assume that you would prefer one of our two-bedroom cabins, each of which have a large stone fireplace.

You asked about the location of the cabins in relation to the lake. All of the cabins are on the water. As the pictures in the brochure reveal, a guest can almost step directly in the lake from the front sun deck!

Summer rates for the various types of accommodation are listed in the brochure. At present we can offer lots of choice in cabin units, but we expect a heavy demand for reservations during the next two weeks. In a normal summer tourist season we are awfully busy from mid-June to early September, so if you decide to come to Pine Pass, I suggest that you reserve as soon as possible.

Thank you for your interest in Pine Pass Lodge.

Yours sincerely,  
(Mrs.) Viola Stern,  
Manager.





11831 - 129th. Avenue,  
Edmonton, Alberta,  
September 30, 1966.

Mr. L.B. Potts,  
General Manager,  
Consumer Sales Division,  
Continental Department Stores,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Mr. Potts:

I have received your letter of September 22 in which you express concern over my dissatisfaction with the service I have received on major kitchen appliances purchased at Continental Stores.

The reason that I finally wrote to you personally was because I had received very little co-operation from anyone connected with your regular service department.

I trust that I can be quite frank with you about my opinion of your company's customer service. My major complaint is that there have been so many delays in sending a man to my home to do the necessary work on the stove and washing machine (see my letter of September 14 for details). I have gotten rather tired of vague excuses from your service department. In spite of repeated telephone calls, only once has a serviceman from Continental appeared, and his work was completely unsatisfactory.

This whole experience has proven to my satisfaction that the functioning of your service department leaves a great deal to be desired. Quite frankly, if I was in charge of this department, I would certainly make a thorough investigation of current policies and personnel.

Yours truly,

Norman Green

---



## D I R E C T I O N S

Each of the following sentences might be spoken or written at one time or another by various people in our society. I am interested in obtaining a cross-section of opinion from educated people on the acceptability of each sentence in speech or writing.

- 1) If you consider a sentence acceptable in any situation, simply check the box marked Accepted.
- 2) If you see any word or expression that you think should not be used in either speech or writing by educated people, underline that expression and check the box marked Rejected.
- 3) If you would not totally reject an expression, but would restrict its use to certain situations (for example : formal vs informal; speech vs writing), underline the expression and check the box marked Restricted.

(A brief written comment to explain your decision in these cases would be appreciated, but is not required.)

- 
- 1) This bread is far different than the kind we eat at home.

Accepted ☐ Rejected ☐ Restricted ☐

Comment : \_\_\_\_\_

---

- 2) We are only allowed five dollars for spending money.
- 3) They felt badly about moving away.
- 4) The agent, knew about us having to reject the offer.
- 5) Neither the time nor the money are satisfactory.
- 6) Encourage everybody to play as well as they can.
- 7) It looks like I made a serious mistake.





- 8) Is there any objection to me staying at the hotel?
- 9) If I was a young man, I would do it.
- 10) Who do you plan to send?
- 11) Neither of the classes have the assignment finished.
- 12) Was it him who made the speech?
- 13) The police should try and establish a motive.
- 14) The baby's toys were laying around the room.
- 15) He is one of these people who inspires confidence.
- 16) He not only has a chance to learn, but also to meet friends.
- 17) Is there anyone who does not know their assignment?
- 18) The motorist had to make a choice between three routes.
- 19) Of the two dresses, the red one is least appealing.
- 20) He tipped the boat, which gave the occupants a soaking.
- 21) I know better than her what our chances are.
- 22) The invitation to my brother and I arrived late.
- 23) We were aggravated by their refusal to co-operate.
- 24) Due to large classes, students rarely met their teachers.
- 25) The automatic is the best of the two guns.
- 26) It is expected that everyone will use their own equipment.
- 27) The manager contacted the Regina office.
- 28) Each of the cabins have air-conditioning.
- 29) There has been a sort of unwritten agreement between us.
- 30) The reason I warn you is because you are inexperienced.
- 31) The loss of electrical power has gotten serious.
- 32) Can I ask you a question?
- 33) His performance was awfully clever.





- 34) They hire lots of older men.
  - 35) The train has been stopped for quite some time.
  - 36) The evidence has proven him guilty.
  - 37) We were downtown, so we decided to have lunch.
  - 38) I guess my major worries are financial.
  - 39) The fisherman fell in the river.
  - 40) Perhaps tomorrow I will outline our plan.
-



## APPENDIX A

### A P P E N D I X   B

#### M E M B E R S   O F   T H E   B U S I N E S S , U N I V E R S I T Y ,   A N D   E N G L I S H G R O U P S   U S E D   I N T H E   I N V E S T I G A T I O N





B U S I N E S S   G R O U P

- 1) Don Brown (Personnel Manager, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation)
- 2) Ray Buxton (President, Buxton Real Estate Ltd.)
- 3) M.S. Cooke (Director of Personnel, University of Alberta)
- 4) A. Craig (Senior Selection Officer, Government of Alberta)
- 5) Barry Graves (Personnel Manager, Simpsons-Sears Ltd.)
- 6) Donald Holmes (Selection Officer, Government of Canada)
- 7) Mel G. Hurtig (President, Hurtig Booksellers Ltd.)
- 8) J.S. Livingstone (Personnel Manager, Northwestern Utilities)
- 9) John Macaulay (Personnel Director, City of Edmonton)
- 10) L. Dewitt (Personnel Manager, Government of Alberta Telephones)
- 11) Don Massig (Personnel Manager, Eaton's)
- 12) J. Ogston (Personnel Manager, Woodward's)
- 13) L. Saint-Laurent (Personnel Manager, CFRN Television)
- 14) Roger Smith (Personnel Manager, Hudson's Bay Company)
- 15) Sidney Wyman (Director of Personnel, Public School Board)





U N I V E R S I T Y   G R O U P

- 1) Dr. M.A. Clark (Secondary Business Education)
- 2) Dr. H.F. Clifford (Department of Zoology)
- 3) Dr. L.E. Gads (Associate Dean of Engineering)
- 4) Dr. J. Gilles (Director of Summer Session & Evening Credit)
- 5) Dr. W.B. Heeney (Department of History)
- 6) Dr. A.J. Hough (Director of Student Counselling)
- 7) Dr. R. Jones (Department of Sociology)
- 8) Professor M.H. Kelley (Department of Philosophy)
- 9) Dr. V. Nyberg (Department of Educational Psychology)
- 10) Dr. D. Rankin (Department of Physics)
- 11) Dr. J. Seger (Department of Educational Administration)
- 12) Dr. R. Sinclair (Department of Mathematics)
- 13) Dr. O. Sitwell (Department of Geography)
- 14) Professor G. Turner (Assistant Head Librarian)
- 15) Mr. R.B. Wishart (Administrator of Student Awards)



E N G L I S H   G R O U P

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- 1) Dr. Charles Berst (University of Alberta)
- 2) Mrs. M. Billau (Jasper Composite High School)
- 3) Dr. J. Bilsland (University of Alberta)
- 4) Mrs. J. Carnine (Head, McDougall Junior High School)
- 5) Mr. H. Charles (Head, Jasper Place Composite)
- 6) Professor F. Clandfield (University of Alberta)
- 7) Dr. J. Forrest (University of Alberta)
- 8) Dr. H. Hargreaves (University of Alberta)
- 9) Mr. G. Hartson (Bonnie Doon Composite)
- 10) Dr. J. MacIntyre (University of Alberta)
- 11) Miss M. Molloy (Head, Bonnie Doon Composite)
- 12) Professor N. Parker-Jervis (University of Alberta)
- 13) Mr. M. Podealuk (Jasper Place Composite)
- 14) Sister Margaret Rose (Head, O'Leary High School)
- 15) Mrs. C. Saville (Jasper Place Composite)





A P P E N D I X C

T E X T B O O K S   A N D   G O V E R N M E N T  
E X A M I N A T I O N S   U S E D   I N  
T H E   I N V E S T I G A T I O N





Textbooks From Which the Forty Usage Items  
Used in the Investigation Were Selected

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-



Provincial Departmental Examinations

Used in Selecting the Forty Usage

Items for the Investigation

(Examinations cover the years 1961-65)

- BRITISH COLUMBIA : Secondary School Examination Papers  
(University Program)
- ALBERTA : High School and University Matriculation  
Examination Board (English 30)  
  
High School Entrance Examination Board,  
Departmental Examinations (Grade IX)
- SA SKA TCHEWAN : June Tests & Supplementals (Grades  
VIII to XII)
- ONTARIO : No official departmental examinations.  
Usage standards discussed, with  
examples, in a Department of Education  
"Memorandum" entitled, Notes for All  
Teachers of Grades 11, 12, and 13  
English.
- QUEBEC : Department of Education Examinations  
(Grade X)  
  
Senior High School Leaving Examinations
- NOVA SCOTIA : Atlantic Provinces Examining Board  
(June Examinations: Grades XI and XII)
-





A P P E N D I X   D

T A B L E   O F   C O N F L I C T I N G   O P I N I O N  
O V E R   S A M P L E   U S A G E   I T E M S





ITEMS ↓	Tressler <u>MEE</u>	Potts Nichols <u>DLS</u>	McMaster- McMaster <u>CC</u>	Baker <u>W&amp;I</u>	Aurner <u>EBE</u>	Corbin- Perrin- Buxton <u>GME</u>	Bryant Contemp. Am. <u>Usage</u>	Evans Dict. of Contemp. Am. Usage	Nicholson American English <u>Usage</u>
shall- will	Unqualified Distinction	Unqualified Distinction	Unqualified Distinction	Usually "will"	No distinction in informal	No distinction in informal	No distinction Style problem	"Will" almost universal	Formal distinction but fading
like (conj.)	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden	Marginal: Strong drift	Undesirable	American speech. Marginal in Canada	Spoken Standard. Informal Written	Standard Style Problem	Widely used Status Confused
in- into	Unqualified Distinction	Unqualified Distinction	Unqualified Distinction	Mixed Informally	-	Mixed Informally	-	Either: matter of emphasis	-
who- whom	"Who" informal, but stress on "whom"	Unqualified Distinction	-	Distinction in very formal	Unqualified Distinction	"Who" general in informal	Distinction in very formal	"Who" almost universal	Distinction in writing not speech
neither + plural	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden	Informal	Informal	Informal	Forbidden but common
everybody + plural	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden in formal	Forbidden	-	Acceptable after intervening material	Usually plural pronoun singular verb	Forbidden
only (position)	-	No Flexibility	No Flexibility	-	No Flexibility	-	Not fixed in Standard English	Before verb in Literary English	Position Quite Flexible



C O M M E N T S   O F   T H E   J U D G E S   O N   T H E  
T A P E D   A N D   W R I T T E N   M A T E R I A L

C O M M E N T S   O F   T H E   J U D G E S   O N   T H E  
T A P E D   A N D   W R I T T E N   M A T E R I A L





Below are transcriptions from tape of the remarks made by various judges after listening to the simulated interview between the college graduate and the personnel manager (See Appendix A). Any words enclosed in brackets are those of the investigator.

---

#### JUDGMENTS ON THE FLUENCY OF THE SPEAKERS

At the conclusion of the tape, the judges were asked the following question : "The young man will be asked to go out into the business and university world to talk to owners of bookstores, university professors, university administrators, and other generally well-educated people. On the basis of the evidence you have heard, do you feel that he would be fluent and well-spoken enough to handle a job of that kind?" Parts of the answers of all fifteen members of the Business Group are given below, together with a cross-section of answers from the University Group.

##### Business Group

- 1) The young lad was quite precise. He seemed fairly well spoken, but he was conscious of it, I think. A bit too precise, but I'm not surprised to hear a fellow in that situation speak that way....He sounds on his guard to me, and he sounds like he's choosing his words, and he's clipping them off very carefully, and dotting his i's and crossing his t's....Personally, I wouldn't have too much doubt about his ability to speak properly in that position. His choice of words and his English generally were fairly good in my mind.
- 2) He was pretty concise. He spoke very clearly, I thought. ...A tendency to be a bit wordy at times when he didn't have to be....Certainly sounds bright enough.





3) I was quite impressed.....I think he sounds quite mature, and expresses himself very well, I thought. I would have no fears about his ability to speak to educated people. He was fluent, and seems to have a rather nice way of putting his point across.

4) He's fluent, and he's certainly not shy.

5) I would say he would be acceptable.....Judging from this sample, he speaks quite well, with some fluency, and with reasonable ease during this interview...and he gives me the impression that he would be well suited to chat with clients and customers.

[What about the personnel manager?]

The manager? We-1-1, actually you'll find both the speech and writing language used in business today is not very good. I see many letters that come across my desk, both from inside our service and from the business community, and many of these are not examples of good business letters. But I would say the personnel man there speaks quite well; he's got a nice way of speaking in the sense that he was fluent....His language was not too far from what you would find in general practice.

6) I'm not a grammarian, let me say that; I plead pragmatic sanction insofar as speech is concerned....But I thought that it was better than average speech, and that may surprise you. The consistent superior quality of this kind of conversation in regard to grammatical correctness is better than average.

7) I think he's certainly average.....I consider myself average in English, and I think he is also. The employer? I say he's average again, too.

8) A good average, certainly.....

9) He's making a good impression. He's probably more fluent than the average person would be under those circumstances.

10) The general level of language is what you'd expect.

11) I think the boy was very fluent. I don't think he made many grammatical errors.....The presentation of his ideas was logical. I would consider he has potential.

12) Linguistically speaking, my impression of both people would be quite positive.





13) It sounds very normal. I haven't any sort of criticism to offer. This is the normal kind of language that would be used in a normal interview. The young man seems reasonably well spoken. I would say his ability is higher than average....He was far more articulate than most people would have been in a similar situation. He had a better than average command of the language, and personal ease.... I have no major criticisms of the employer, either.

14) I think that the young man asked very intelligent questions. I would see nothing in the conversation that would indicate that he couldn't do the job he was being interviewed for.

15) The fact that I'm a personnel manager caused me to concentrate on whether it was a good interview or not, although I did try to keep in mind the quality of the language....There was no real violation of the use of the language, except for a misuse of a word in the one or two places I've pointed out. We've trained ourselves to overlook grammatical errors for the most part; if we notice them, it's because they're glaring....Generally, we're listening for meaning.

#### University Group

1) He spoke as well as the book salesmen who have come to see me so far.

2) My over-all impression of him would have been reasonably favorable....He didn't strike me as someone whose knowledge of the English language was poor, or anything of that sort.

3) I think they both had pretty good command of the language.

4) A few grammatical errors in the speech of the young man. Not too bad, but just enough so that it might bother some professors...perhaps people in the English department more than anywhere else.

5) It sounds quite normal and conversational to me.

6) His command of the language is adequate....There's nothing....There were obviously a few grammatical errors, if you were concerned about the language. What you object to depends on your tolerance in these matters. In my case, I wouldn't have objected too much. Nothing that would hurt his chances : a certain lack of sophistication, but you'd expect that of a college graduate.





7) He is at least as fluent as the publishers' representatives who have actually come to see me.

---

### CONFUSION IN THE USE OF PRONOUNS

Reference was made in Chapter IV to the contradictory reaction of many of the judges to the use of the pronouns he and him after the verb to be. Following is the segment of conversation from the taped interview :

C From Professor Sandford.

E O-o-Oh yes...Wasn't that he I saw on television the other evening?...Speaking..on the future of Alberta industry?

C Yes, that was he.

This subjective use of the pronoun by both the employer and the candidate is formally correct by textbook standards. This point of usage is drilled in classrooms throughout most of a student's elementary and secondary education. How effective is such drill may be judged from the cross-section of commentary quoted below, all of which was evoked by the formally correct use of the pronoun he :

1) The grammar wasn't quite correct in that particular place, was it? It should have been him -- sounded a little awkward.

2) I don't think the young man or the manager would say he, and as a matter of fact, unless I stop to think about it for a minute, I don't know which is correct.

3) Either form of the pronoun would have sounded awkward : I would have avoided the construction.





4) That he from both of them sounded a little fancy -- was it right?

5) Him would probably be more normal -- I don't say it's correct.

6) I would balk at him in writing, but in speech he sounds like an affectation.

7) That should be, "Wasn't that him...."

[Did "Wasn't that he" sound a little formal?]

It just sounds grammatically incorrect -- it's not the object of the verb.

8) I'm pretty uncertain myself about the use of he and him. I'm never quite sure what to use. For instance, when he said, "Wasn't that he" -- this isn't right, is it? It sounds funny. I'm uncertain whether it's right or not. I would say him.... Then I start to think, you know : he? him? Am I right or wrong? He sounds stilted, whatever is right.

9) He rings awkwardly in my ear.... I'm not an expert on grammatical constructions, but it sounds unusual. Him would sound more normal.

10) He jarred me....

11) I don't feel comfortable with the use of the word he. In my usage, him is more natural, although it may have been incorrect. I would have felt more comfortable with him.

12) Was that a correct usage of he? Him would have gone right by, but I noticed he.

13) He is stilted.... They suddenly become mindful of proper grammar --- I couldn't tell you which is the proper usage, by the way. I'm no grammarian!

14) I noticed "That's he," which I think is grammatically correct, but rarely heard.... Strictly speaking, I think... my command of English grammar being no better than the next man's... the speakers are correct, but you never hear it. It's not idiomatic. It's not what I hear every day, and I'm sure I wouldn't have used it.

15) I would have thought "Wasn't that him" was better, but when I heard it I thought, Well, he's probably right.... But I'm a little careless in my English, and I'm not sure whether it's he or him. But I thought he was emphasizing it.



In the first of the sequence of letters used in the investigation, the following construction occurs :

Thank you for your letter of May 14 inviting  
Mr. Charles Simpson and me to be guests...

This is a formally correct use of the pronoun me as object of the participle inviting. However, eleven of the fifteen business judges protested this usage, preferring either I or myself in its place. Myself was most favored. Four of the university judges also objected to me. Below are samples of the commentary :

1) There's often a conflict in people's minds over which is the correct usage in pronouns....I think it's more common to say, "to Mr. Simpson and I," whereas me may be more technically correct.

2) I can't remember what my teachers told me about this one....Frankly, me sounds funny. I would use myself or avoid the construction altogether.

3) That sounds a bit crude. I or myself would be smoother.

4) I prefer "Simpson and I to be guests." Myself? No, it's not preferable to me, because the tendency in English is to use the shortest and most appropriate word.

[Does me sound a little blunt to you?]

Oh, hell, it's incorrect!....inviting Simpson and I!

5) Although I believe this is grammatically correct, common usage suggests I here.

6) Me seems to me rather clumsy and awkward, but I forget my grammar. I would certainly not write this.







# Appendix F

Experiment 1	1000	1000	1000
Experiment 2	1000	1000	1000
Experiment 3	1000	1000	1000
Experiment 4	1000	1000	1000
Experiment 5	1000	1000	1000
Experiment 6	1000	1000	1000
Experiment 7	1000	1000	1000
Experiment 8	1000	1000	1000

## APPENDIX F

### TABLE OF $\chi^2$ VALUES OBTAINED

Experiment 1	1000	1000
Experiment 2	1000	1000
Experiment 3	1000	1000
Experiment 4	1000	1000
Experiment 5	1000	1000
Experiment 6	1000	1000
Experiment 7	1000	1000
Experiment 8	1000	1000



$\chi^2$  VALUES OBTAINED

Problem A

Hypothesis 1	:	618.33	( $p \leq .01$ )
Hypothesis 1.a.	:	154.84	( $p \leq .01$ )
Hypothesis 1.b.	:	696.16	( $p \leq .01$ )
Hypothesis 1.c.	:	222.92	( $p \leq .01$ )
Hypothesis 2	:	250.16	( $p \leq .01$ )
Hypothesis 3	:	261.96	( $p \leq .01$ )
Hypothesis 4	:	248.59	( $p \leq .01$ )

Problem B

Hypothesis 5	:	264.56	( $p \leq .01$ )
Hypothesis 5.a.	:	31.40	( $p \leq .01$ )
Hypothesis 5.b.	:	248.67	( $p \leq .01$ )
Hypothesis 5.c.	:	107.16	( $p \leq .01$ )
Hypothesis 6	:	136.33	( $p \leq .01$ )
Hypothesis 7	:	94.88	( $p \leq .01$ )
Hypothesis 8	:	107.43	( $p \leq .01$ )





## A P P E N D I X G

### R E S P O N S E S B Y E A C H G R O U P O F J U D G E S T O T H E F O R T Y I N D I V I D U A L E R R O R S I N S P E E C H , L E T T E R S , & S E N T E N C E S



In the limitations of the study listed in Chapter I, it was pointed out that the investigation was not principally a survey of usage, but rather sought to establish certain guidelines in technique for future surveys on a larger scale. As a result, little attention has been given to the reaction of the groups of judges to the forty individual items of usage. All of the graphs included in the main body of the study have been composite figures which illustrated a rise in sensitivity to usage according to changes in groups of judges or in the medium of communication. It is possible, however, to graph the responses of the three groups of judges to the individual items of usage. On the following pages is a series of graphs which reveals how the forty-five judges used in this study reacted to each of the usage items in the three media of speech, letters, and sentences. The graphs are arranged according to ascending number of objections. The forty items have been grouped as follows :

- 1) GROUP I : These thirteen items were objected to less than 25% of the time by the combined judges in the combined media of speech, letters, and sentences.
- 2) GROUP II : These seven items were objected to more than 25% of the time in combined media, but less than 25% of the time in speech and letters alone.
- 3) GROUP III : These twelve items were objected to more than 25% and less than 50 % of the time.
- 4) GROUP IV : These eight items were objected to more than 50% and less than 75% of the time.





The twenty-five and seventy-five percent divisions were selected to conform to the arbitrary figures set by the Leonard study (see Chapter II, page 21) as the upper limits of the Established and Disputed categories respectively. One advantage that a tripartite study of usage has over single-sentence studies such as those conducted by Leonard and later investigators is that the large number of "disputed" usages may be further differentiated or broken down (the description of Group II above indicates one basis for such differentiation).

Above each of the following graphs is a sentence containing the usage item. Under each graph is a table indicating the total objections of each group of judges to the item in each of the three media. Each figure in the table is the total objections out of fifteen exposures. In parentheses under each table are the percentage objections for each medium, and a mean percentage of objections for combined media. Such a breakdown permits a much more thorough analysis of the status of the item in speech and writing than does the traditional survey based on a list of isolated sentences.

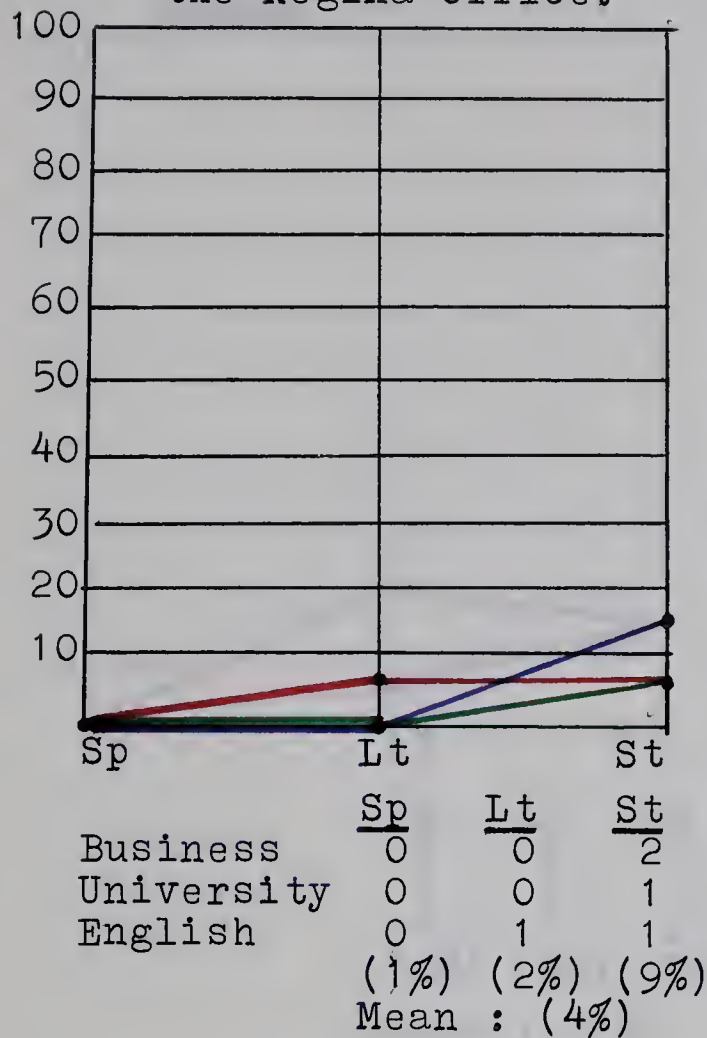
#### GROUP I

Usages in this group probably do not merit classroom attention except as matters of minor linguistic interest among English majors in the senior years.

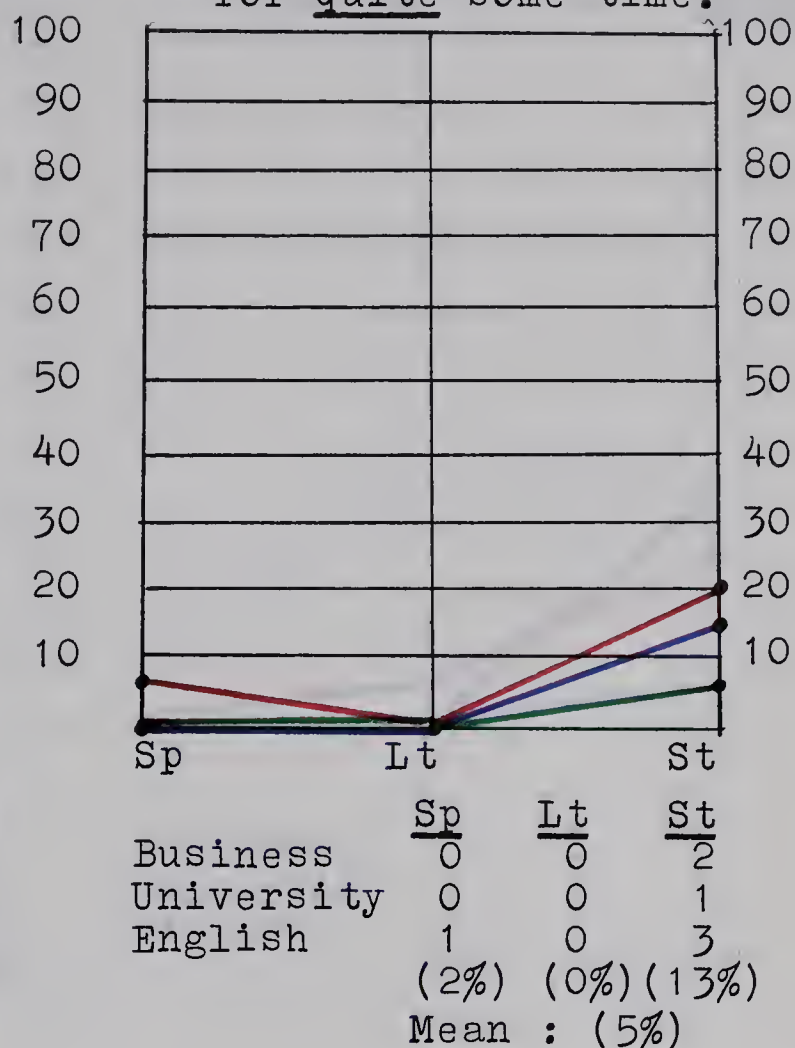
LEGEND :	Business Group	<u>      </u>
	University Group	<u>      </u>
	English Group	<u>      </u>



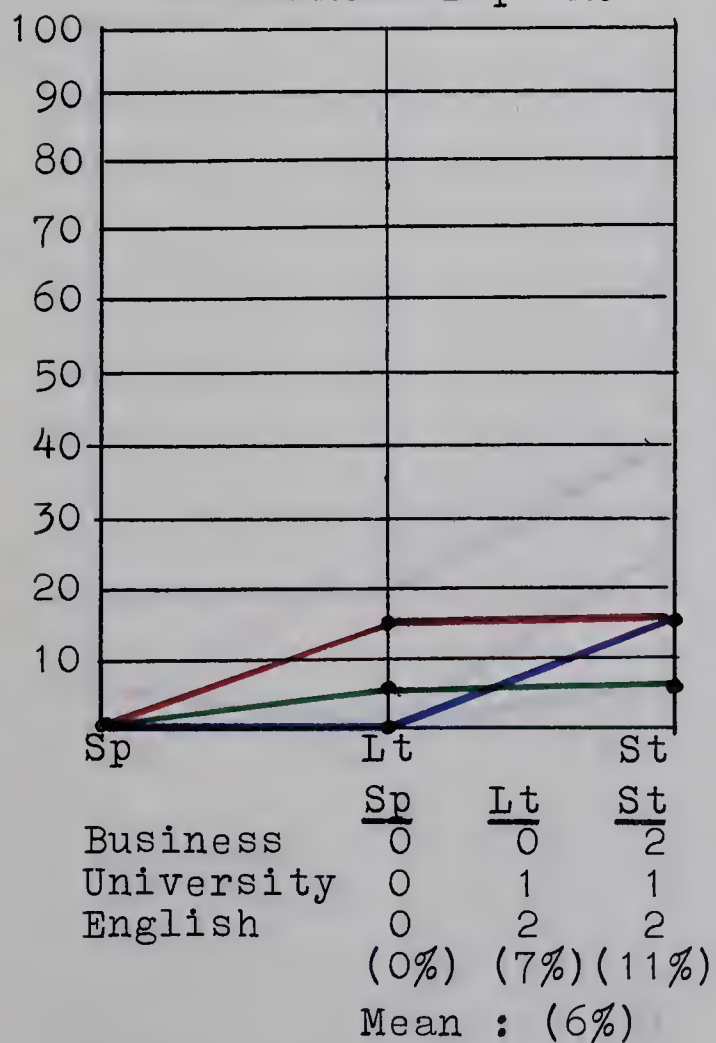
1) The manager contacted the Regina office.



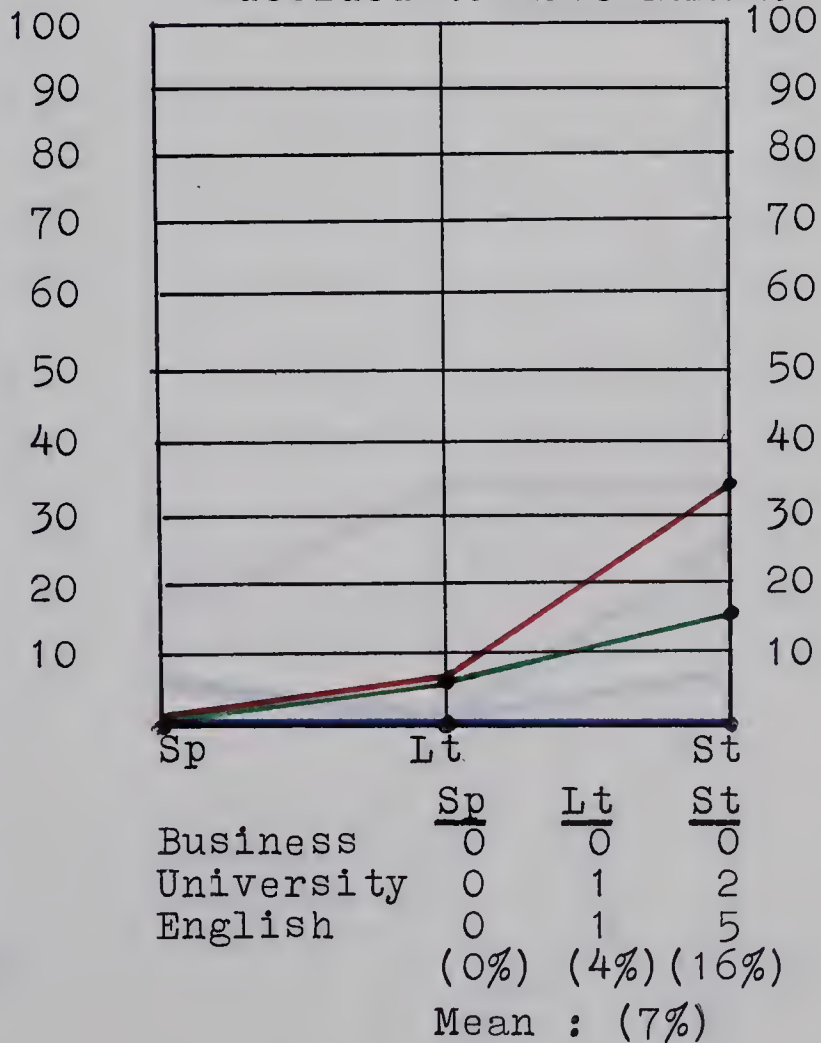
2) The train has been stopped for quite some time.



3) Perhaps I will outline our plan.



4) It was noon, so we decided to have lunch.

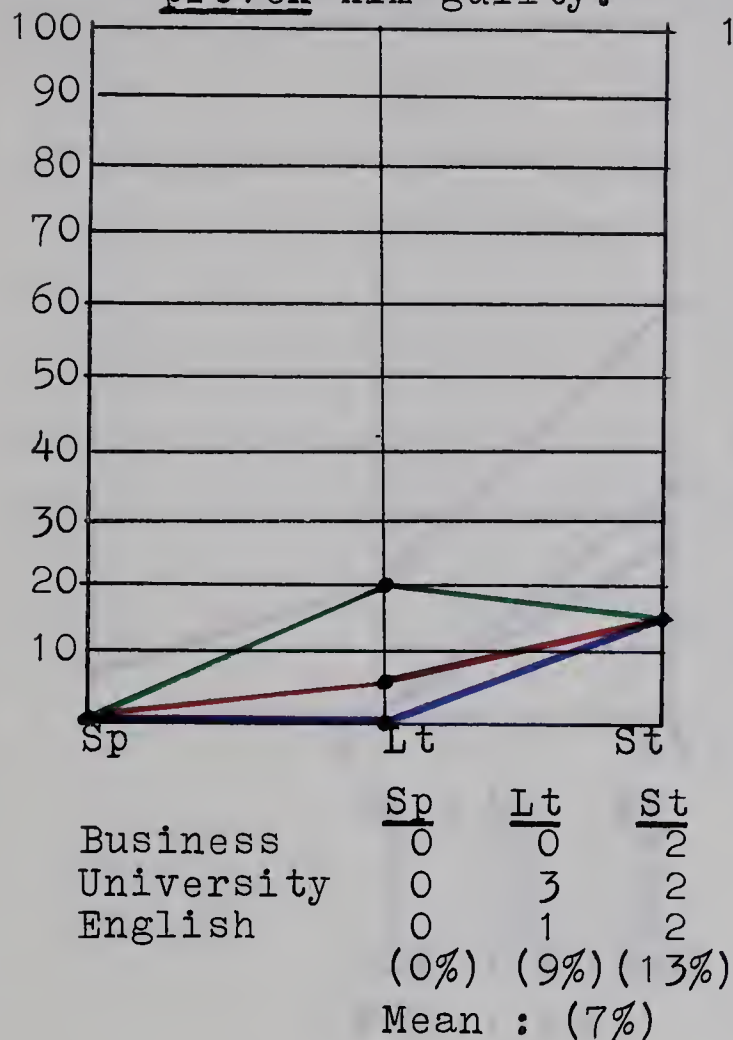




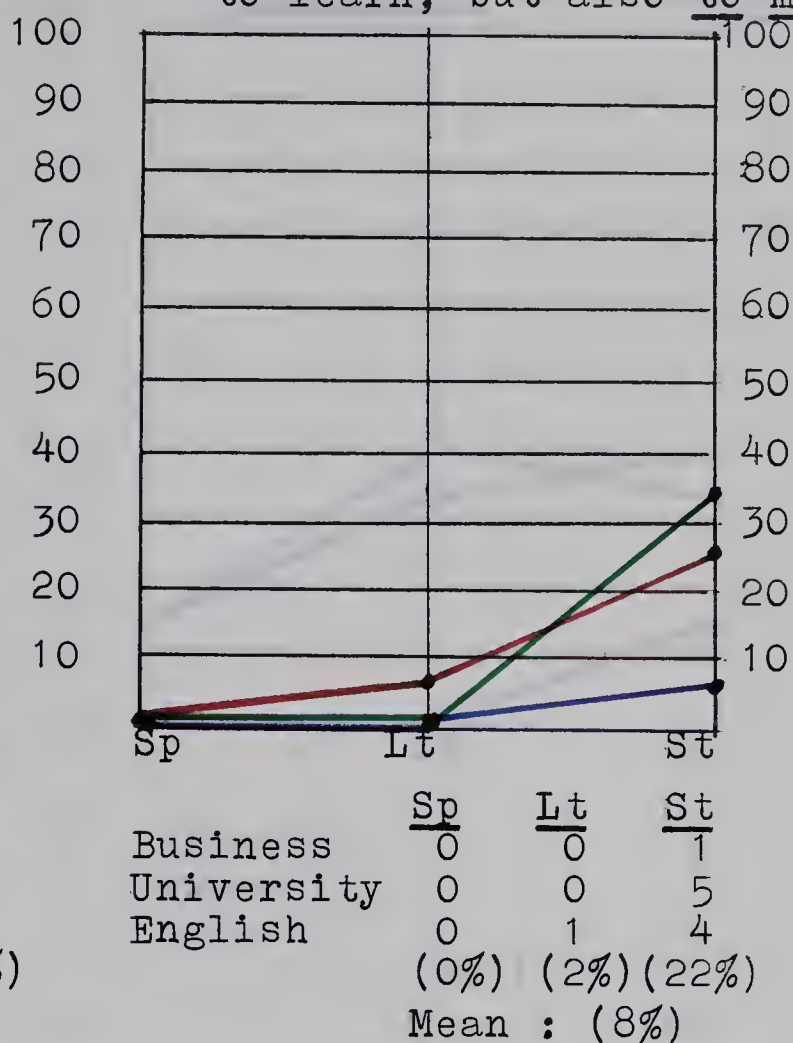




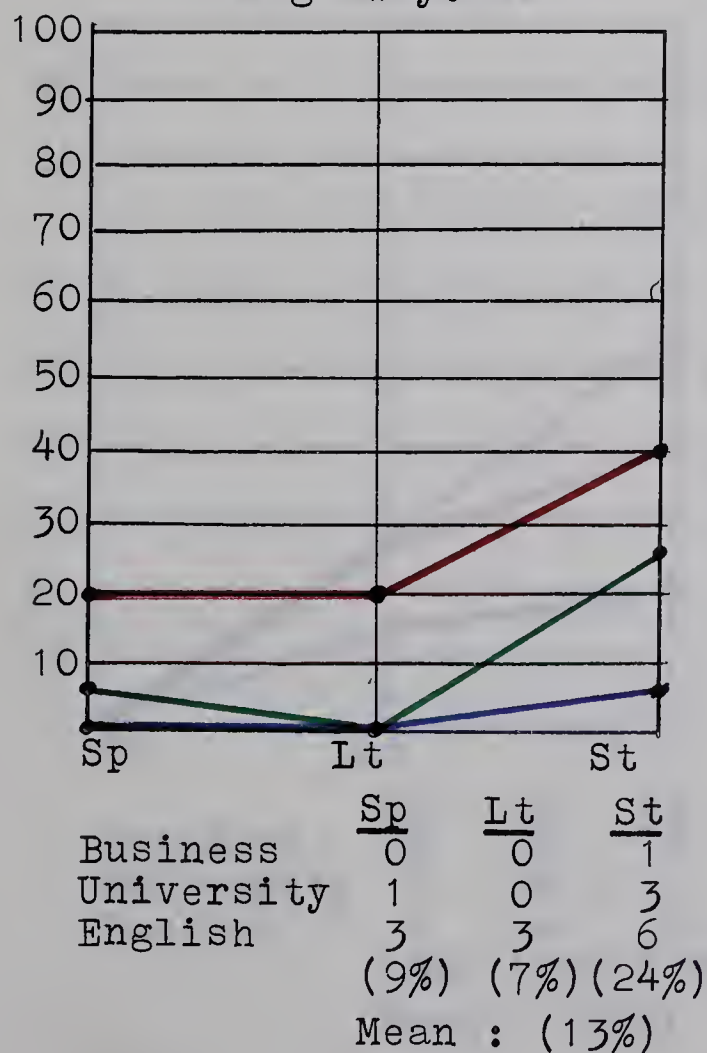
5) The evidence has proven him guilty.



6) He not only has a chance to learn, but also to meet...



7) They felt badly about moving away.



8) He is one of these people who inspires...



Figure 1: Comparison of the proposed method with the existing method for the case of  $\alpha = 0.5$  and  $\beta = 0.5$ .

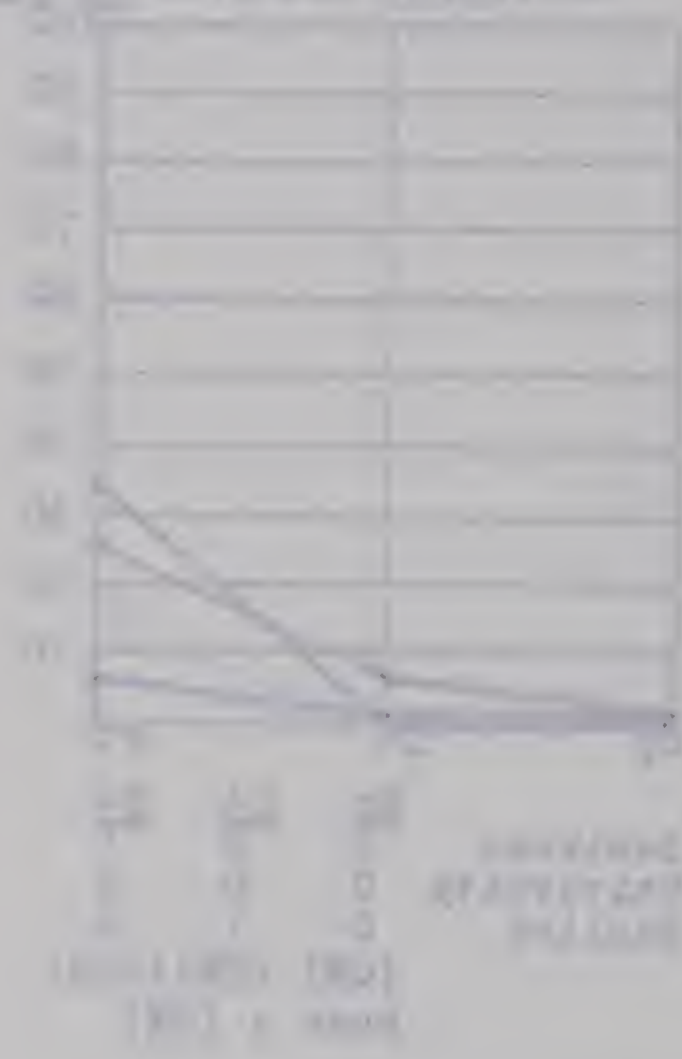


Figure 2: Comparison of the proposed method with the existing method for the case of  $\alpha = 0.5$  and  $\beta = 0.5$  with different values of  $\gamma$ .

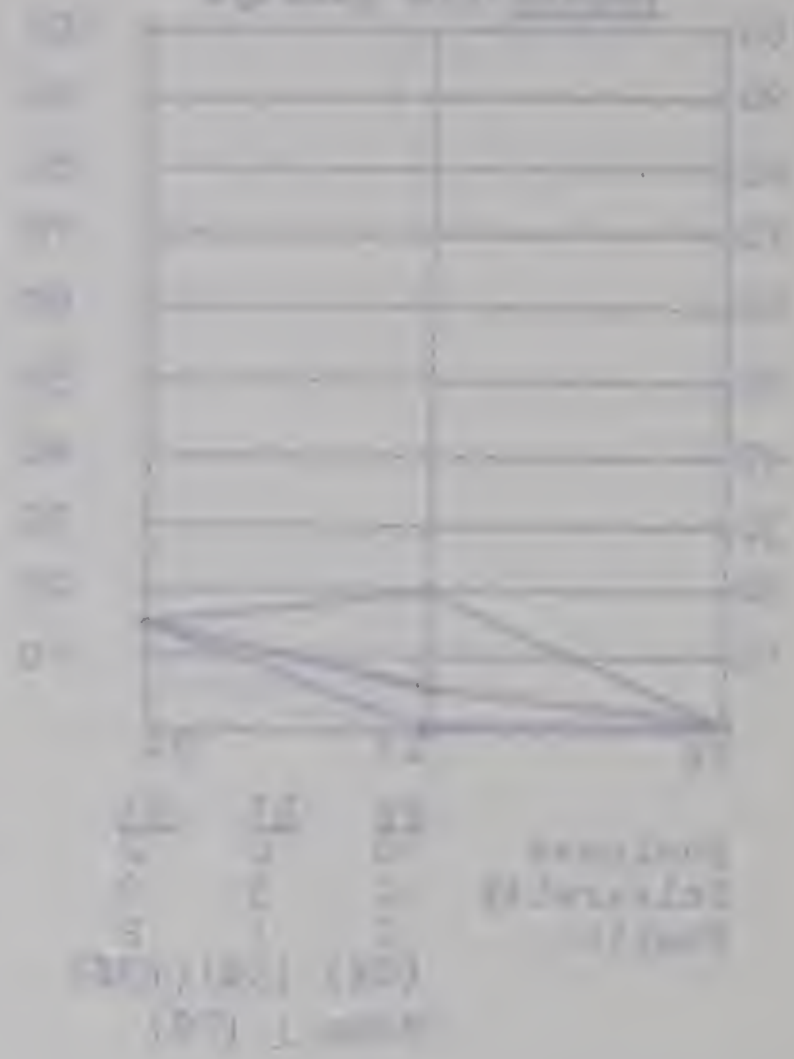


Figure 3: Comparison of the proposed method with the existing method for the case of  $\alpha = 0.5$  and  $\beta = 0.5$  with different values of  $\gamma$  and  $\delta$ .

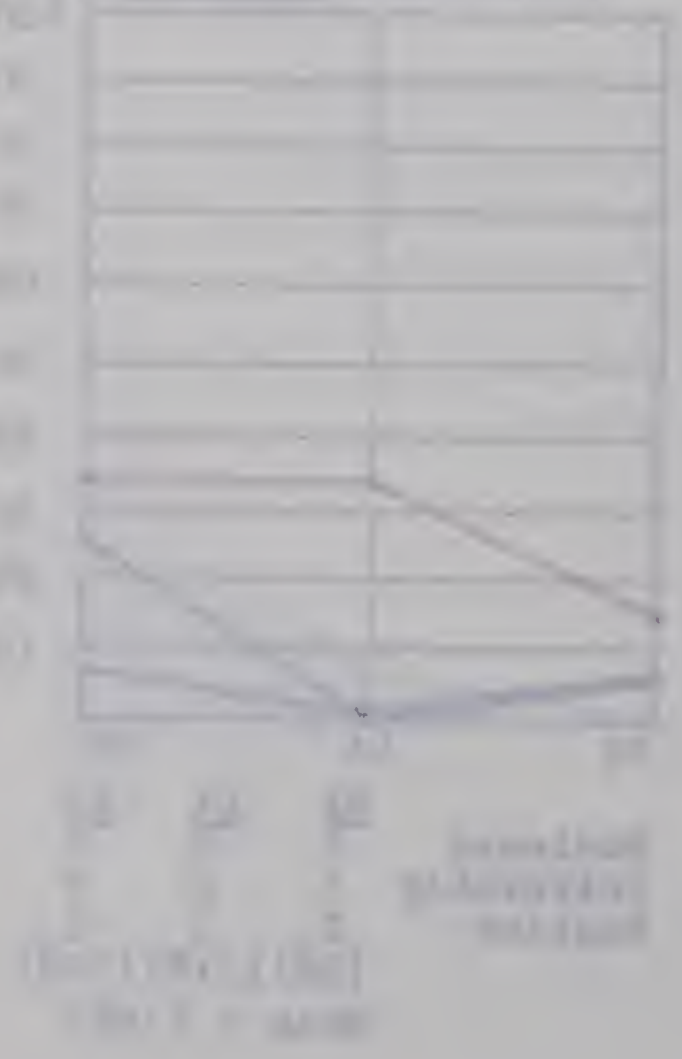
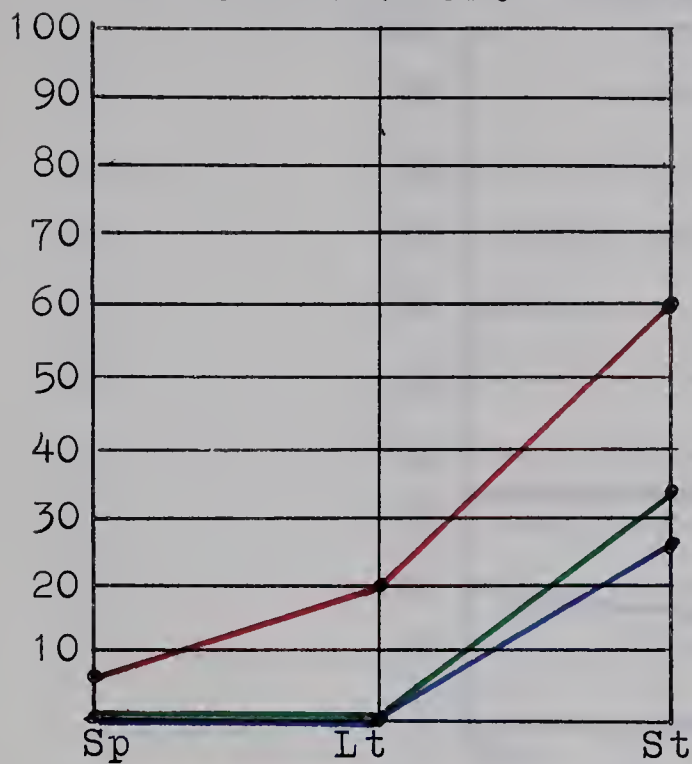


Figure 4: Comparison of the proposed method with the existing method for the case of  $\alpha = 0.5$  and  $\beta = 0.5$  with different values of  $\gamma$  and  $\delta$  and  $\epsilon$ .

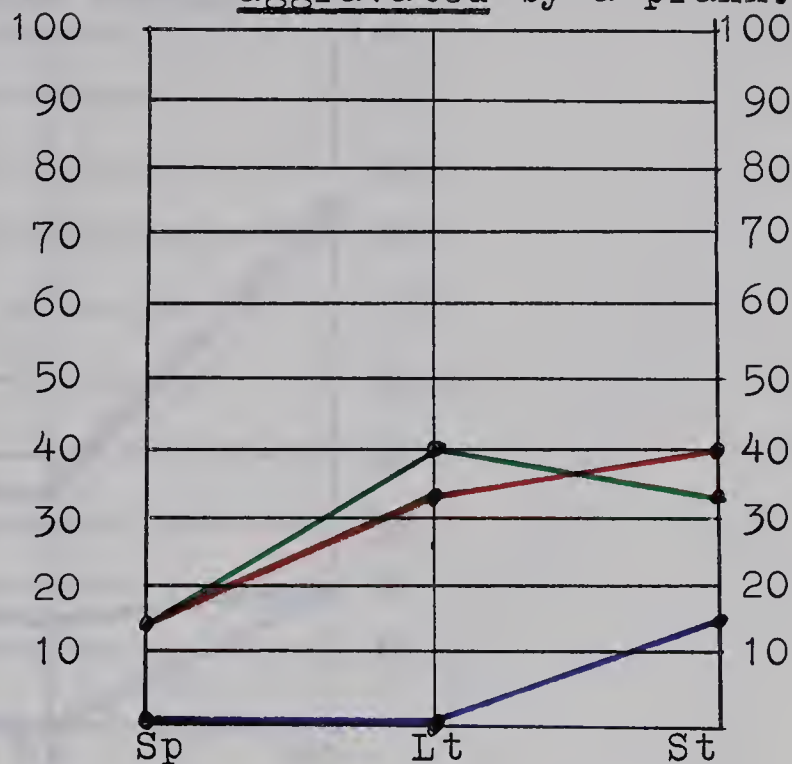


9) I guess my major worries are financial.



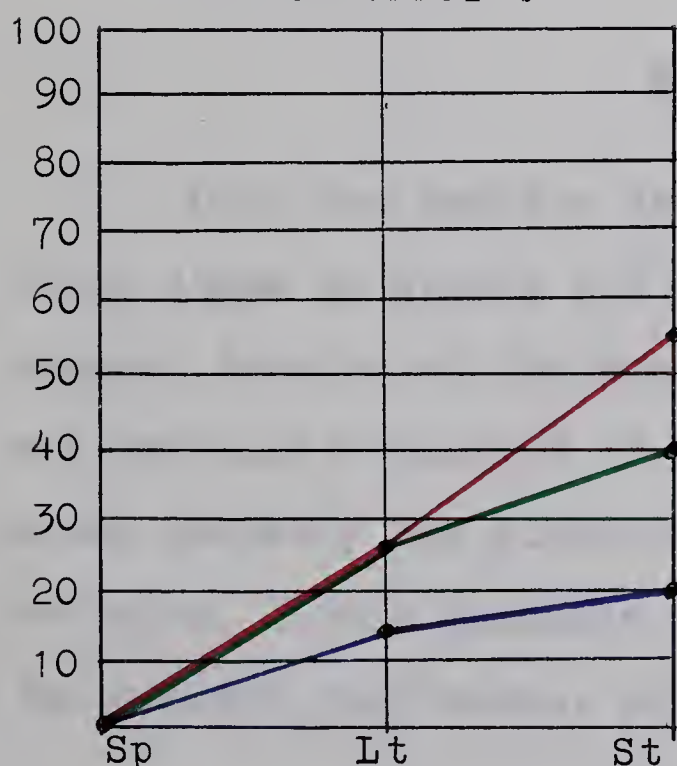
(2%) (7%) (40%)  
Mean : (16%)

10) We were extremely aggravated by a prank.



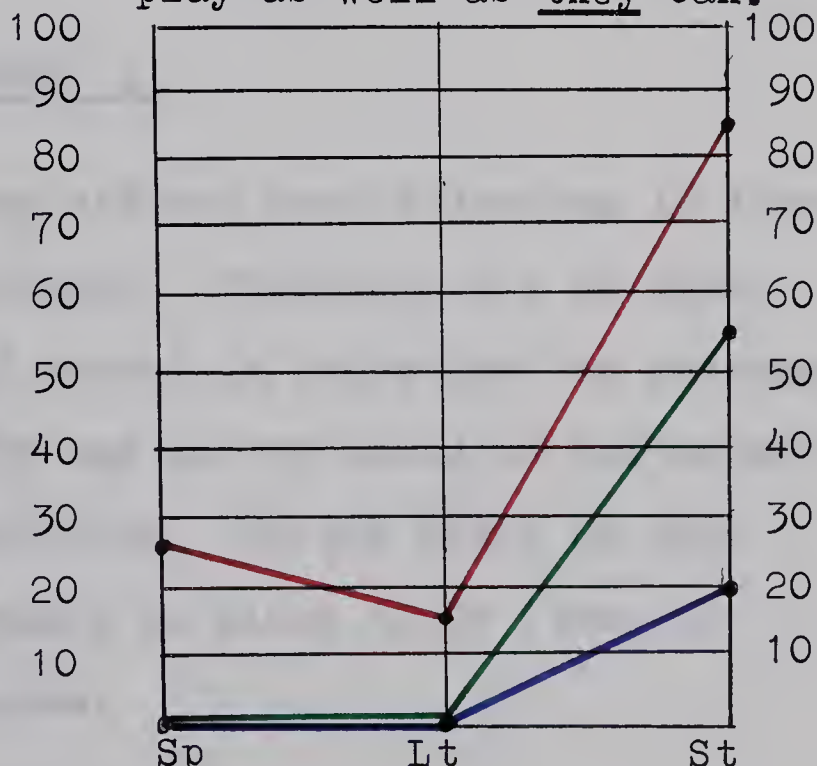
(9%) (24%) (29%)  
Mean : (21%)

11) We are only allowed five dollars.



(4%) (22%) (38%)  
Mean : (21%)

12) Encourage everybody to play as well as they can.



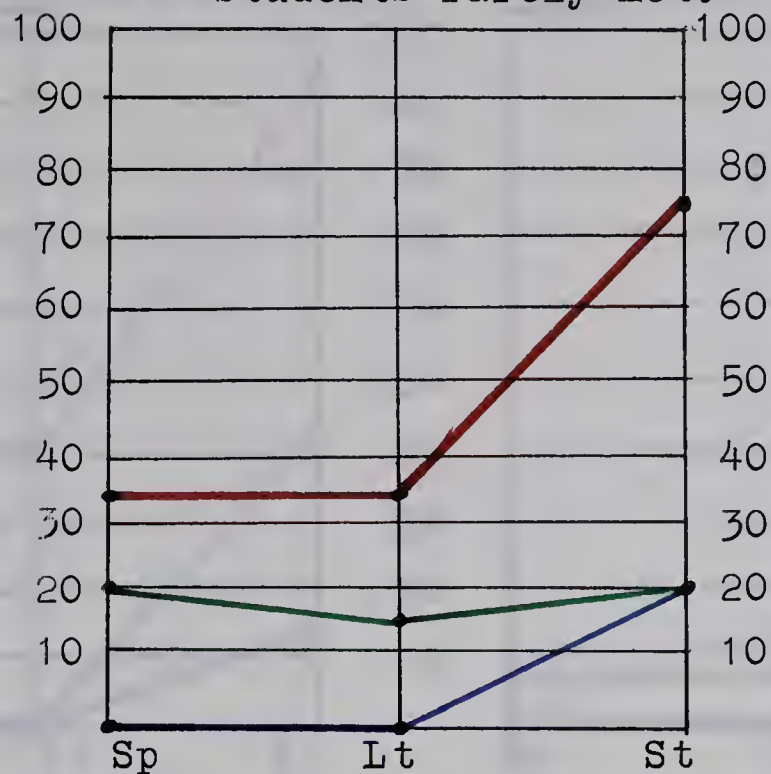
(9%) (4%) (53%)  
Mean : (22%)







13) Due to large classes,  
students rarely met.



	Sp	Lt	St
Business	0	0	3
University	3	2	3
English	5	5	11
	(18%)	(16%)	(38%)
Mean :	(24%)		

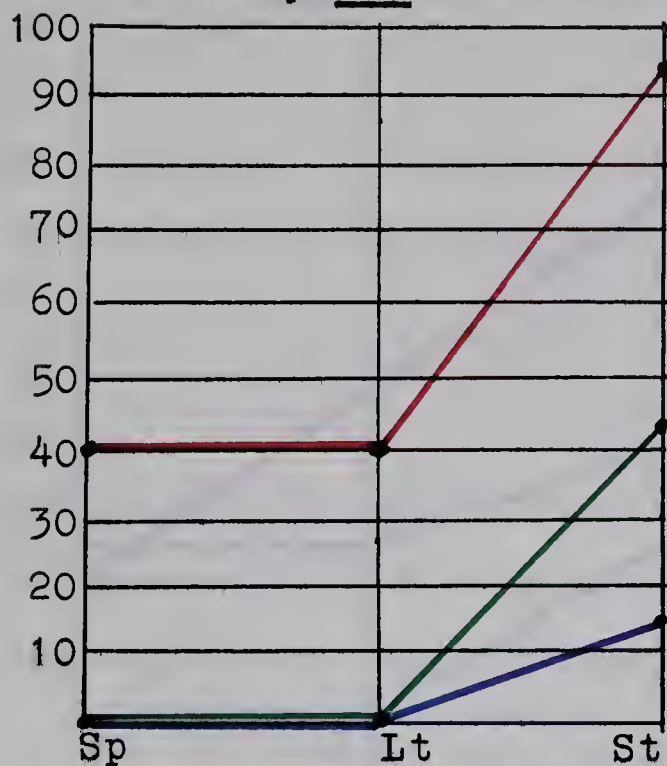
## GROUP II

Only the English Group offered much objection to these seven items in speech and letters. Virtually all of these usages, because of the rapid ascent in objections to sentences, are excellent examples of why any survey based on sentences alone probably has little validity. On the basis of this evidence, little emphasis should be given these items in the general high school program.

LEGEND : Business Group ———  
University Group ———  
English Group ———

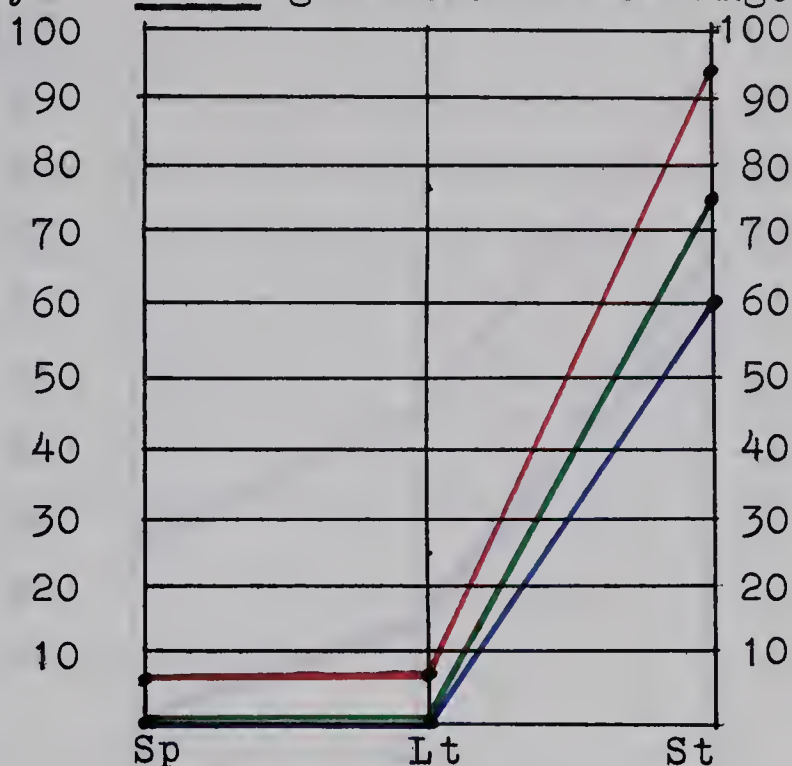


14) Neither the time nor the money are satisfactory.



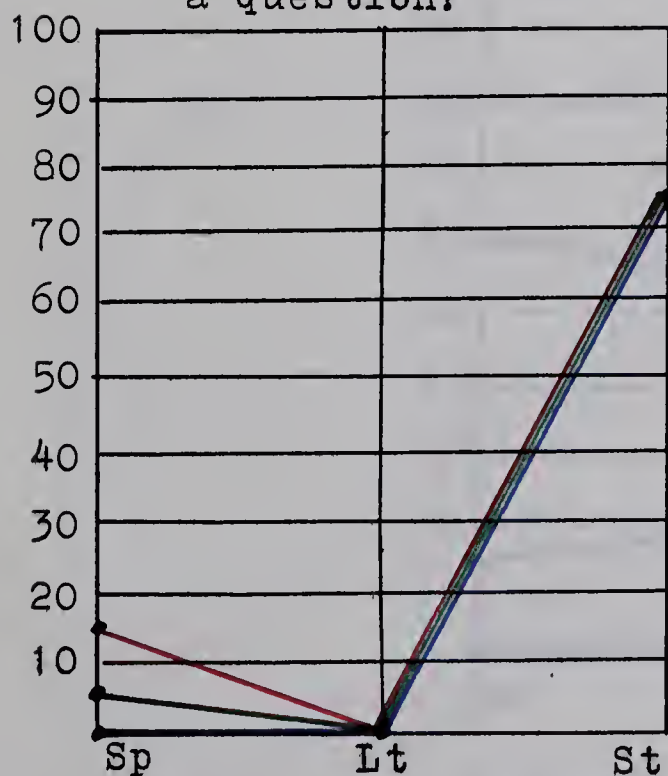
	<u>Sp</u>	<u>Lt</u>	<u>St</u>
Business	0	0	2
University	0	0	7
English	6	6	14
	(13%)	(13%)	(51%)
Mean :	(26%)		

15) He tipped the boat, which gave them a soaking.



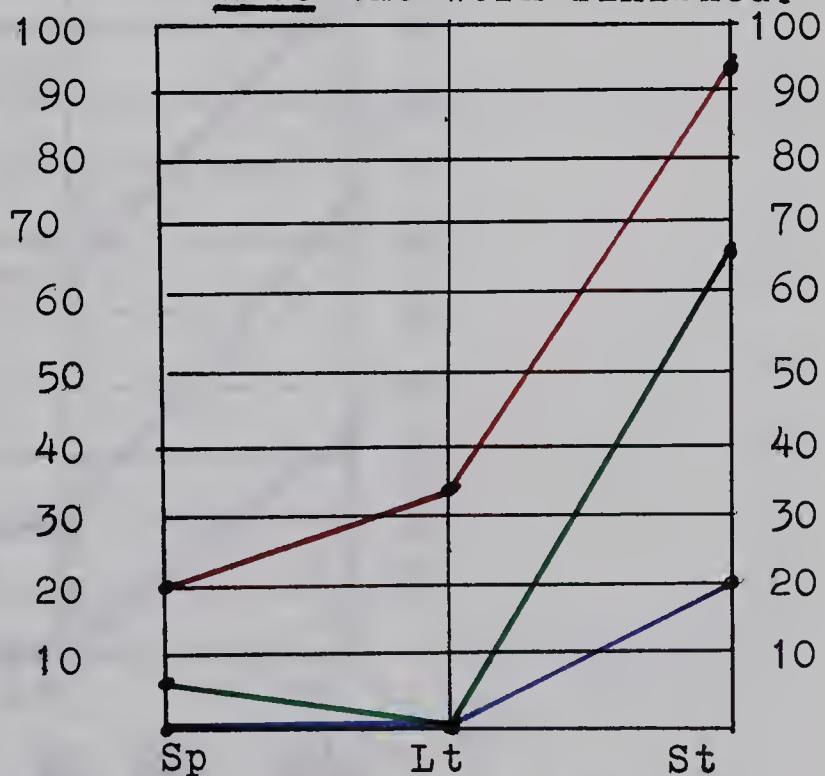
	<u>Sp</u>	<u>Lt</u>	<u>St</u>
Business	0	0	9
University	0	0	11
English	1	1	14
	(2%)	(2%)	(76%)
Mean :	(27%)		

16) Can I ask you a question?



	<u>Sp</u>	<u>Lt</u>	<u>St</u>
Business	0	0	11
University	1	0	11
English	2	0	11
	(7%)	(0%)	(73%)
Mean :	(27%)		

17) Neither of the classes have the work finished.



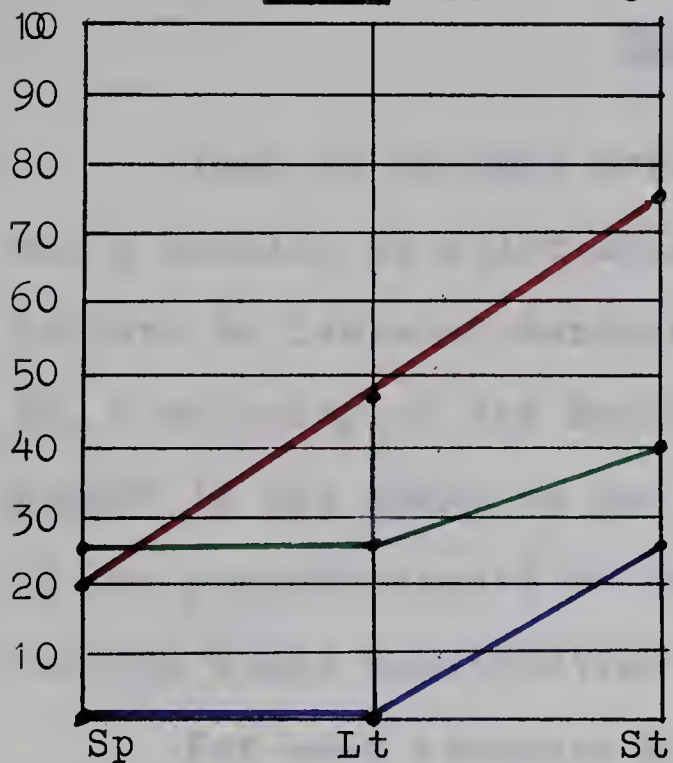
	<u>Sp</u>	<u>Lt</u>	<u>St</u>
Business	0	0	3
University	1	0	10
English	3	5	14
	(9%)	(11%)	(60%)
Mean :	(27%)		





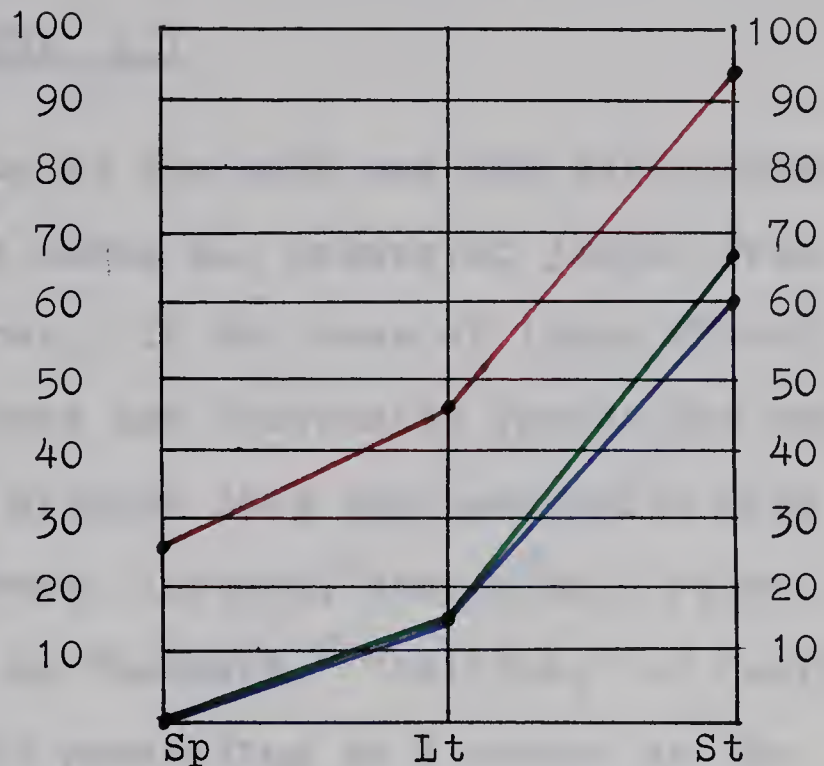


18) Of the two, the red is least appealing.



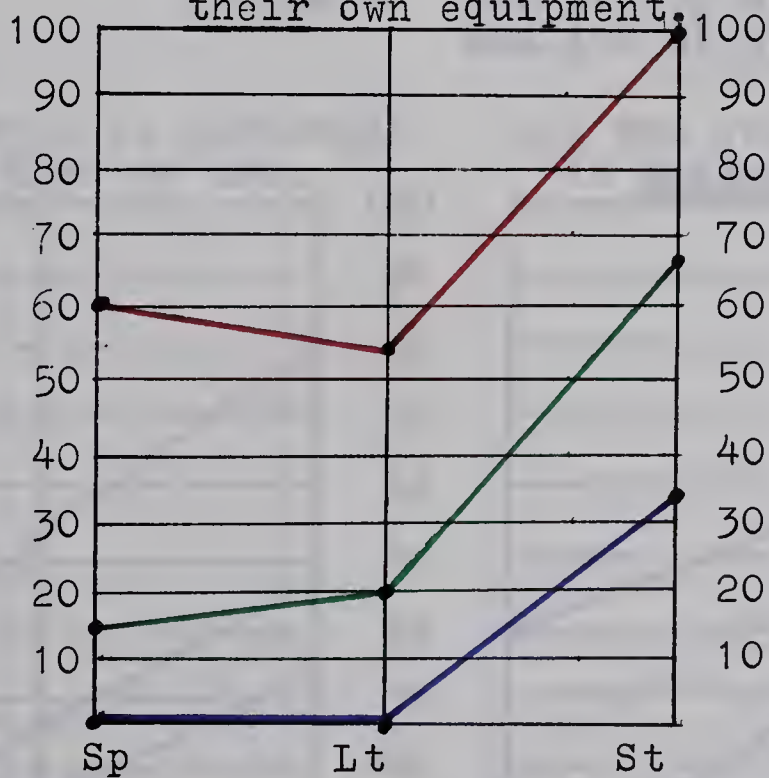
	<u>Sp</u>	<u>Lt</u>	<u>St</u>
Business	0	0	4
University	4	4	6
English	3	7	11
	(16%)	(24%)	(47%)
Mean :	(29%)		

19) It looks like I made a serious mistake.



	<u>Sp</u>	<u>Lt</u>	<u>St</u>
Business	0	2	9
University	0	2	10
English	4	7	14
	(9%)	(24%)	(73%)
Mean :	(35%)		

20) Everyone will use their own equipment.



	<u>Sp</u>	<u>Lt</u>	<u>St</u>
Business	0	0	5
University	2	3	10
English	9	8	15
	(24%)	(24%)	(67%)
Mean :	(38%)		

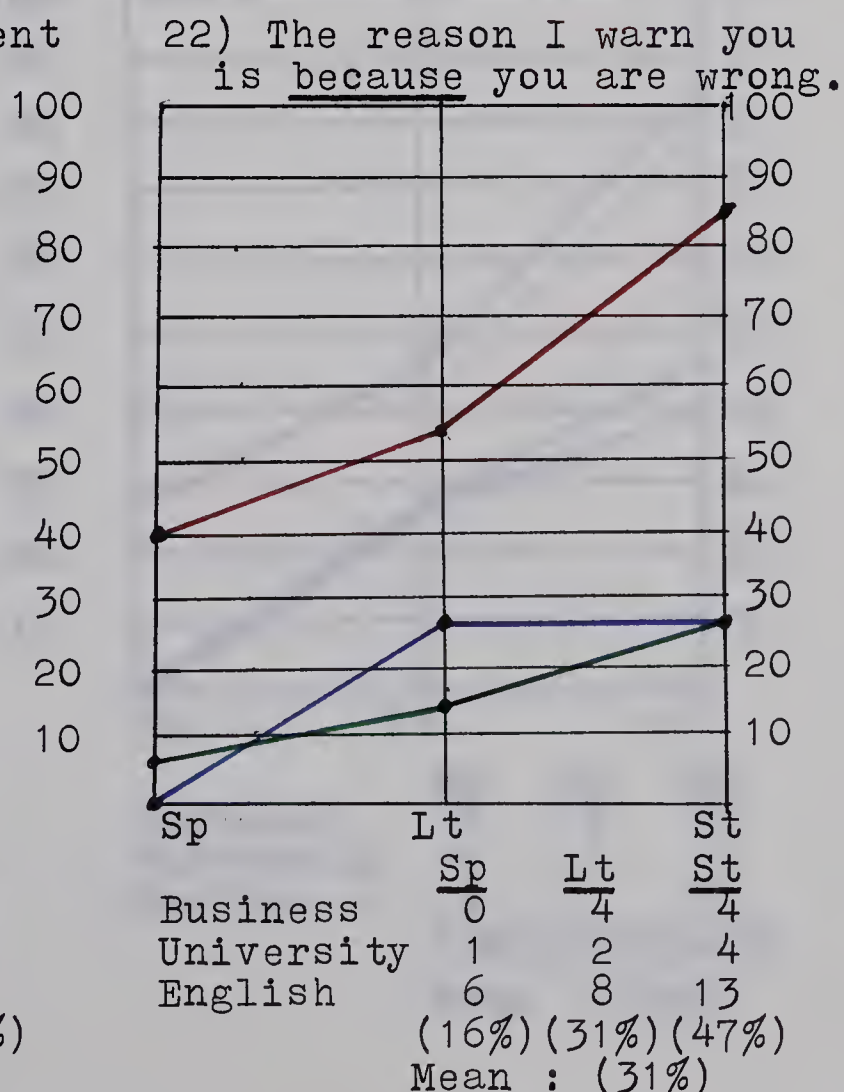
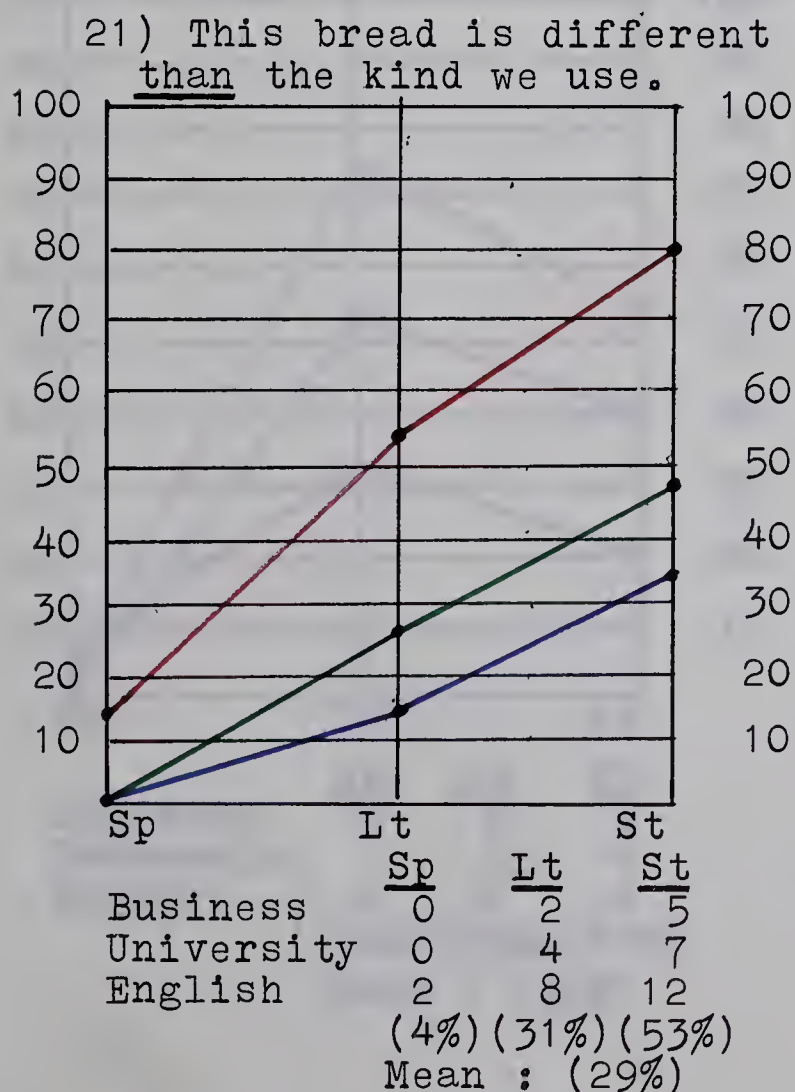


### GROUP III

Item 25 in this group is the only one for which there was a decline in objections among all groups of judges from letters to isolated sentences. In the case of items 29 and 32, a majority of the Business and University Groups did not object to the usage on the grounds that the possessive case of the pronoun should be used; instead, they simply rejected the whole construction as "awkward," "stilted," or "wordy."

For most students not proceeding to a course in the humanities at a university, none of this group should be given particular stress (with the exception, perhaps, of the expression sort of in business writing).

LEGEND :      Business Group      ———  
                          University Group      ———  
                          English Group      ———

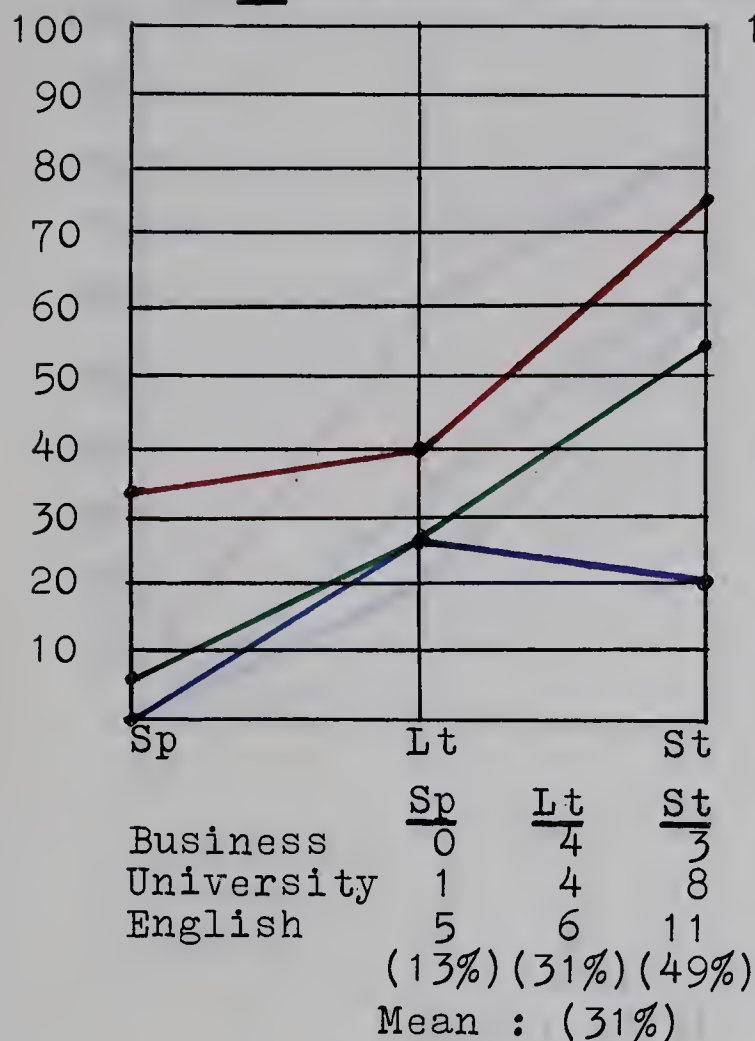








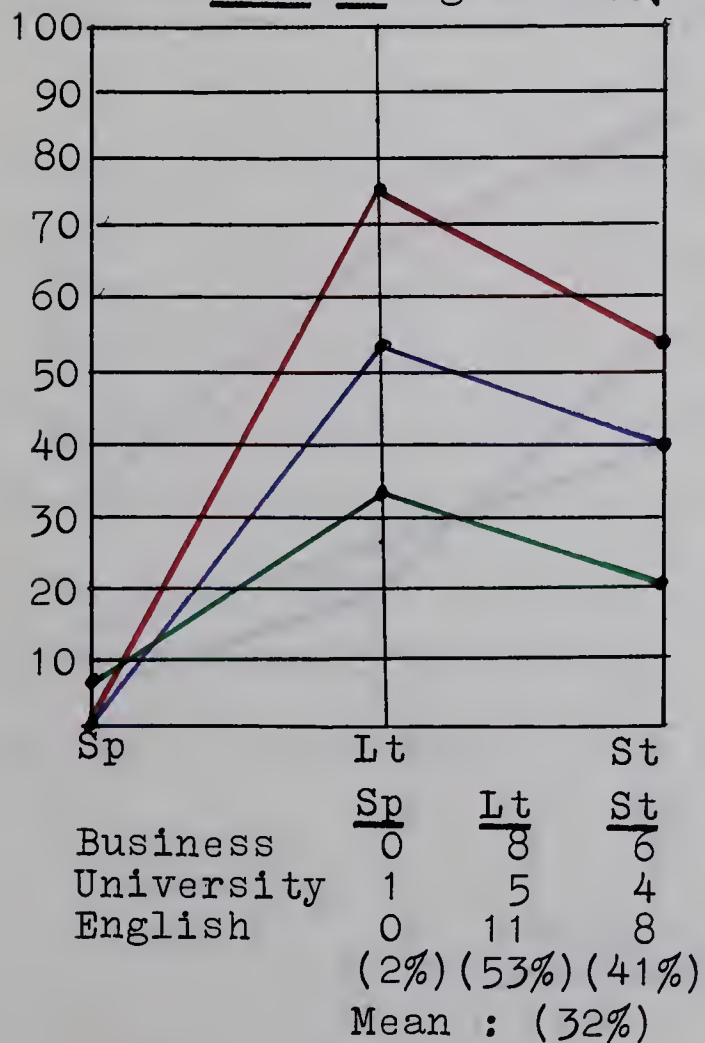
23) The fisherman fell  
in the river.



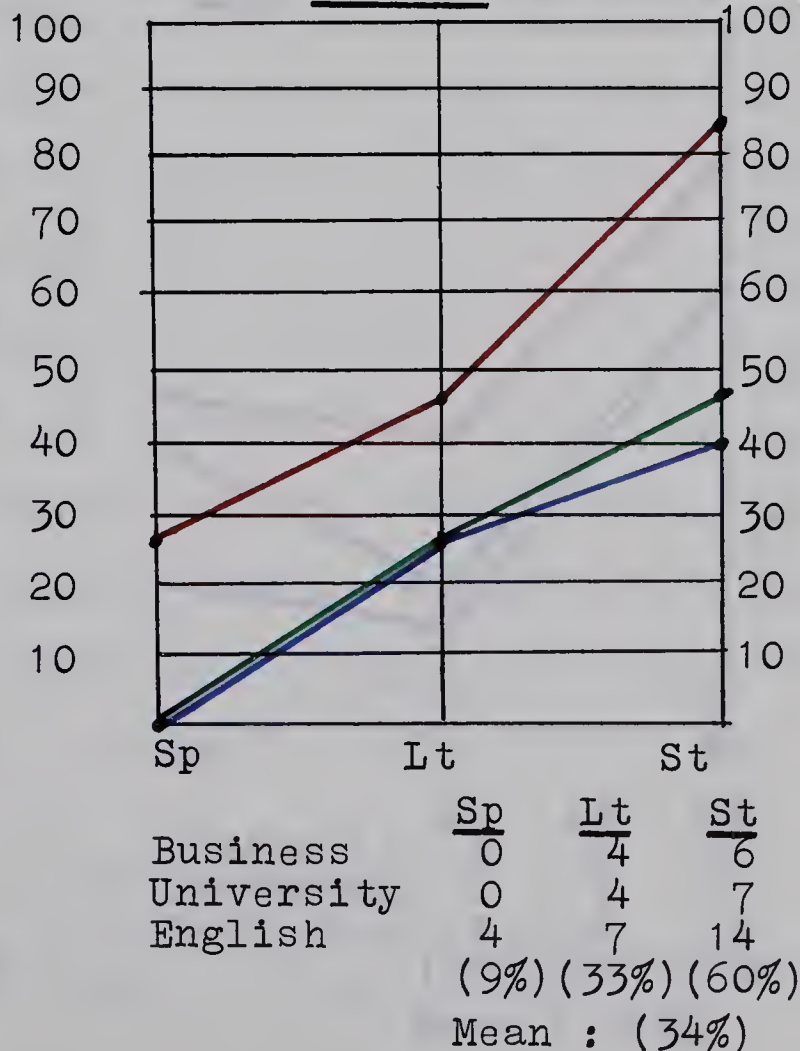
24) Who do you plan  
to send?



25) There has always been  
a sort of agreement.

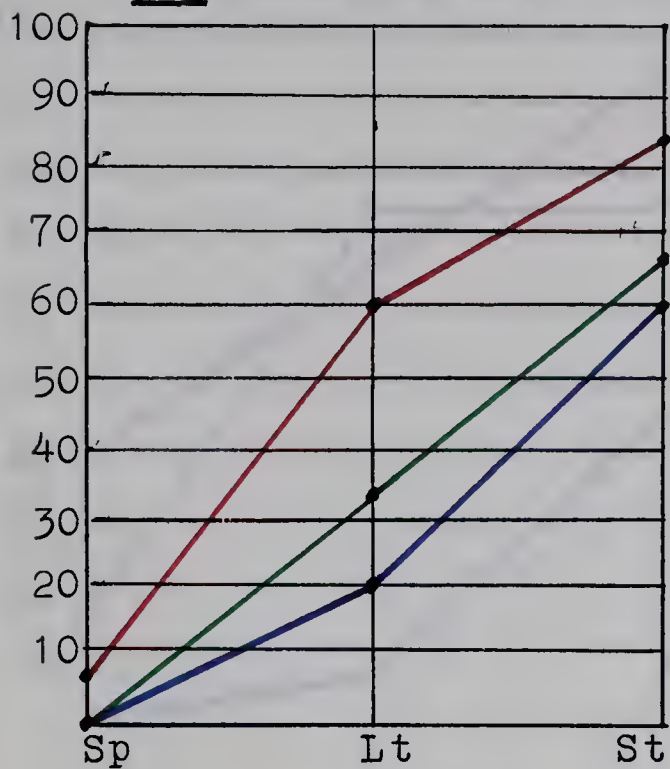


26) The motorist made a  
choice between three roads.



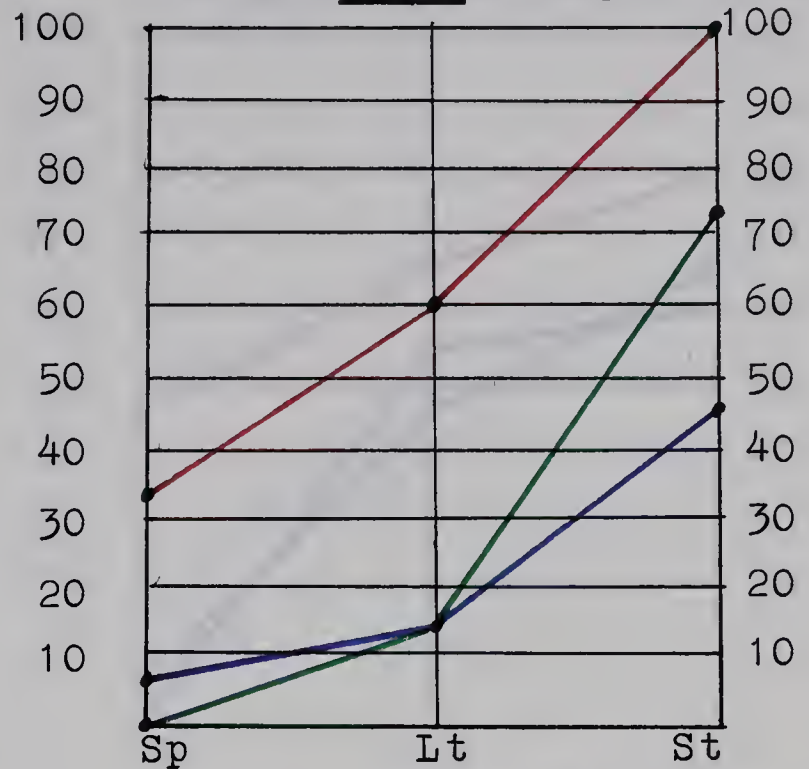


27) The police should try  
and establish a motive.



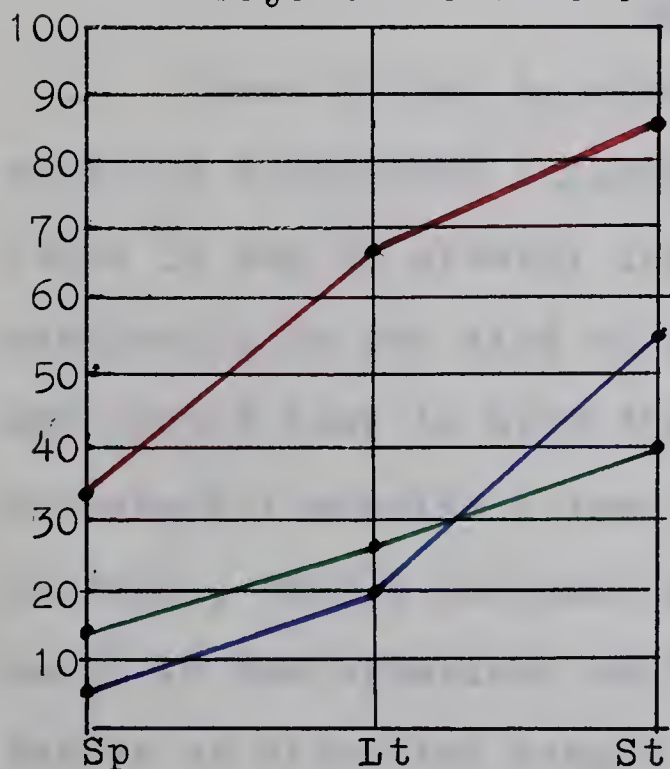
(2%) (38%) (71%)  
Mean : (37%)

28) Is there anyone who  
knows their assignment?



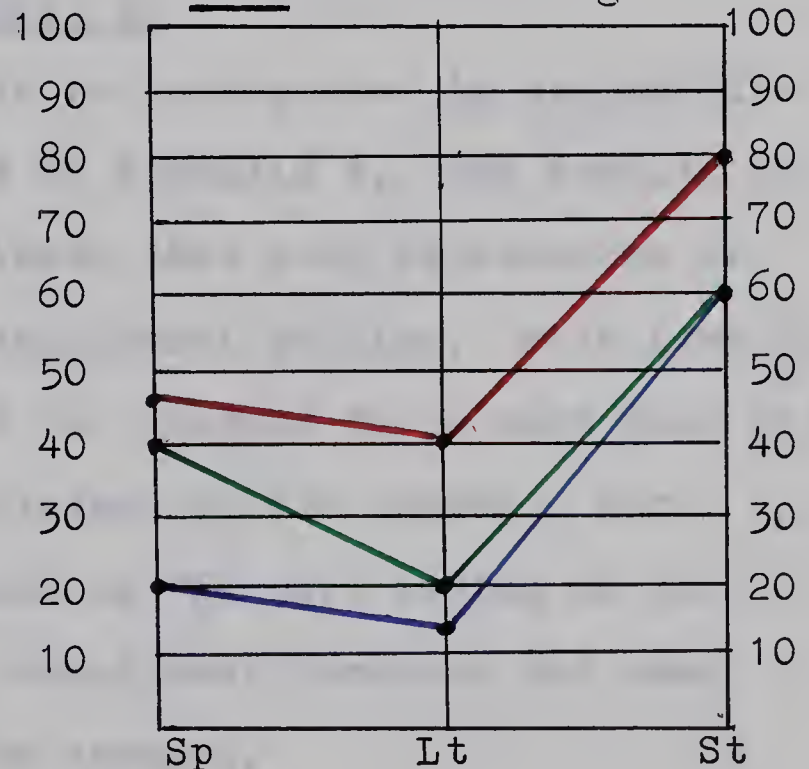
(13%) (29%) (73%)  
Mean : (38%)

29) He knew about us having  
to reject the offer.



(18%) (38%) (60%)  
Mean : (39%)

30) The automatic is the  
best of the two guns.



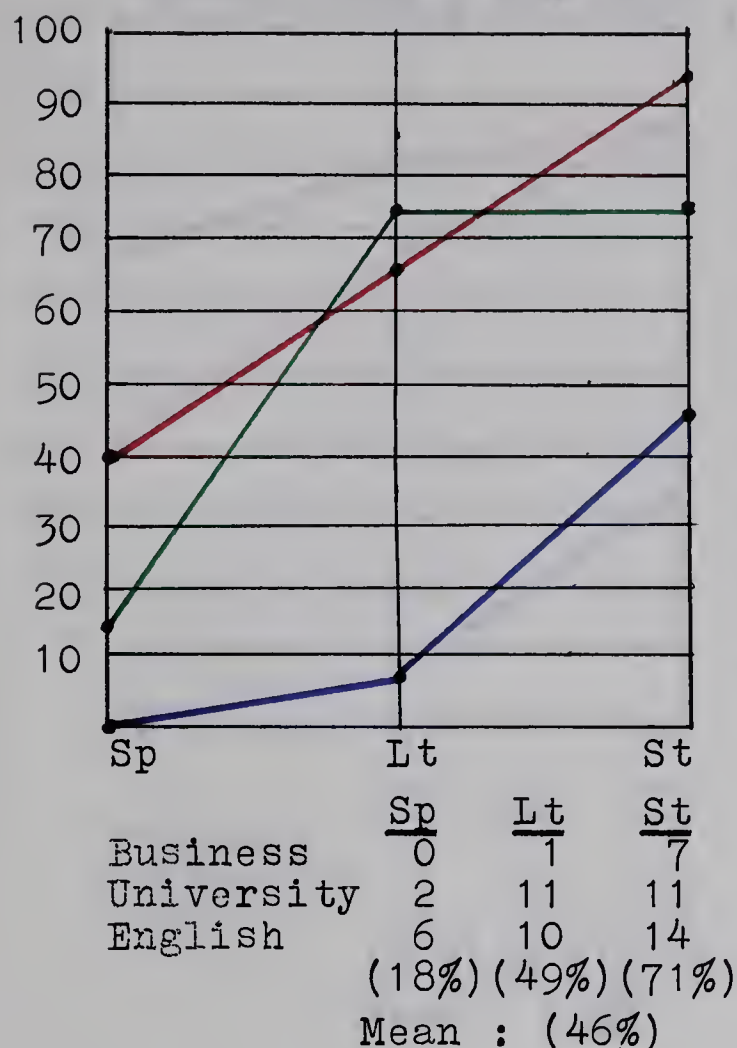
(36%) (24%) (69%)  
Mean : (43%)



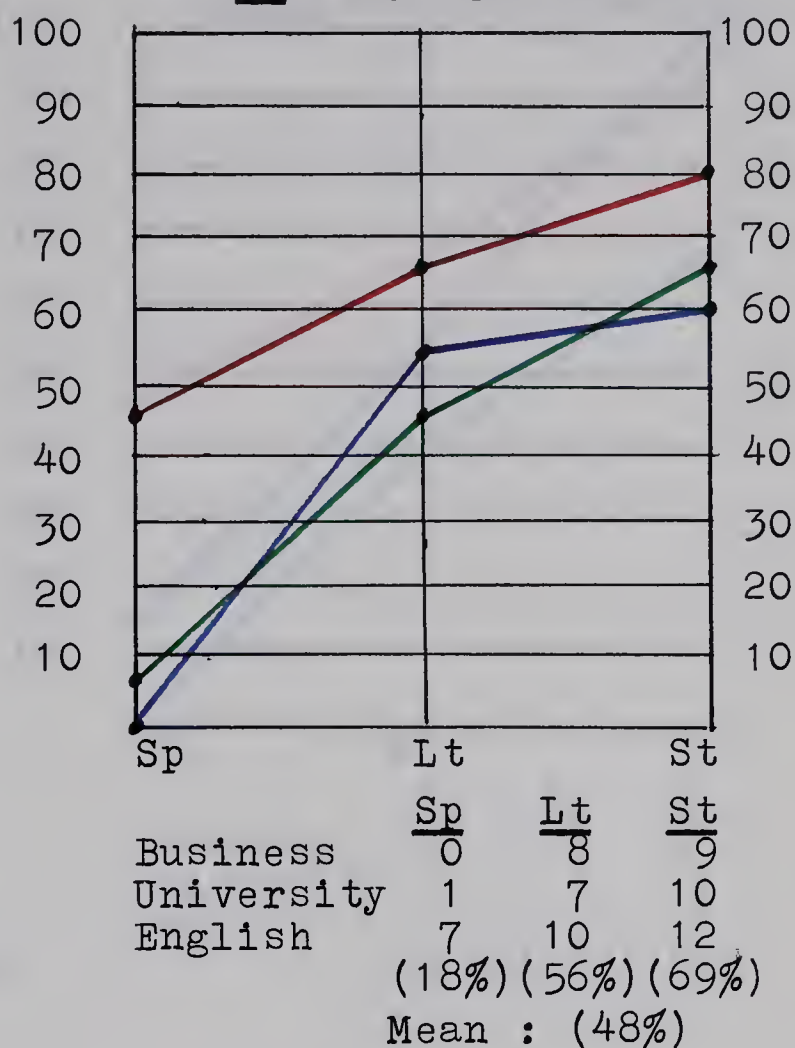




31) If I was a young man,  
I would do it.



32) Is there any objection  
to me staying at the hotel?



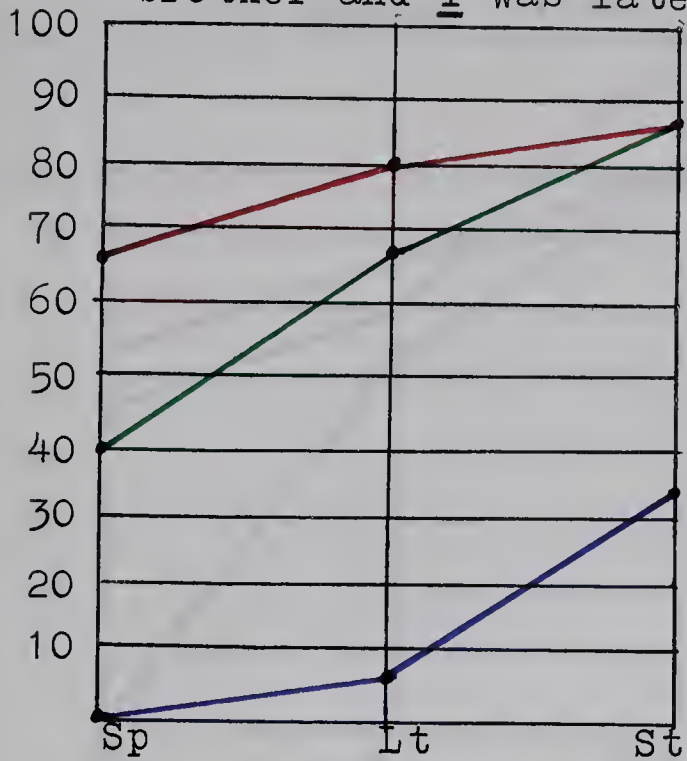
#### GROUP IV

Items 33 and 40 should be interpreted in conjunction with the commentary included in Appendix E. The results for items 35 and 36 clearly indicate that such expressions are unsuitable in any kind of semi-formal writing. With item 38 one should keep in mind that one context for a word does not necessarily provide a true picture of its status. For instance, that a sentence such as "We were laying on the beach in the afternoon sun" would have produced the same degree of objection cannot be assumed.

LEGEND : Business Group —  
University Group —  
English Group —

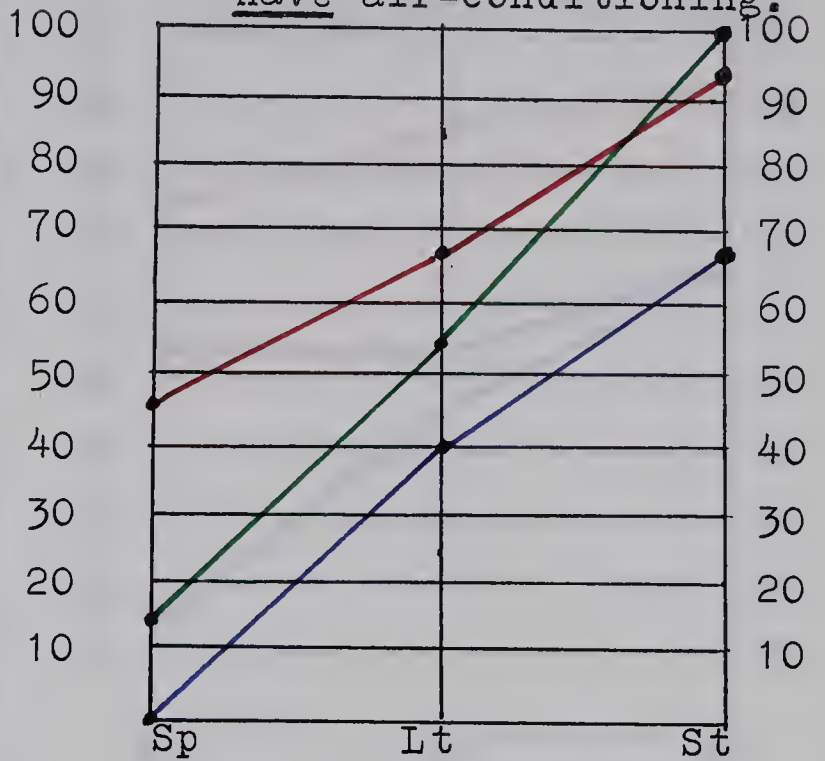


33) The invitation to my brother and I was late.



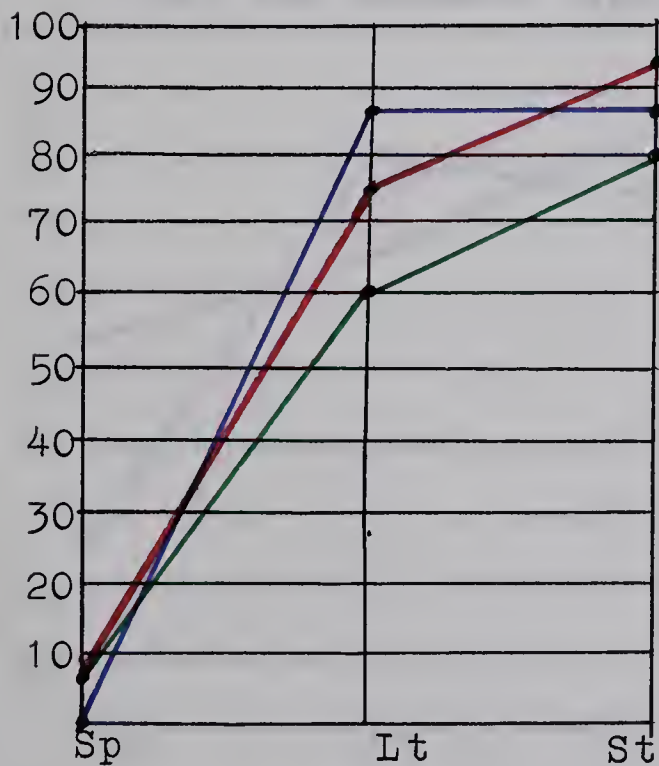
	<u>Sp</u>	<u>Lt</u>	<u>St</u>
Business	0	1	5
University	6	10	13
English	10	12	13
	(36%)	(51%)	(69%)
Mean :	(52%)		

34) Each of the cabins have air-conditioning.



	<u>Sp</u>	<u>Lt</u>	<u>St</u>
Business	0	6	10
University	2	8	15
English	7	10	14
	(20%)	(53%)	(87%)
Mean :	(53%)		

35) They hire lots of older men.



	<u>Sp</u>	<u>Lt</u>	<u>St</u>
Business	0	13	13
University	1	9	12
English	1	11	14
	(4%)	(73%)	(87%)
Mean :	(55%)		

36) His performance was awfully clever.



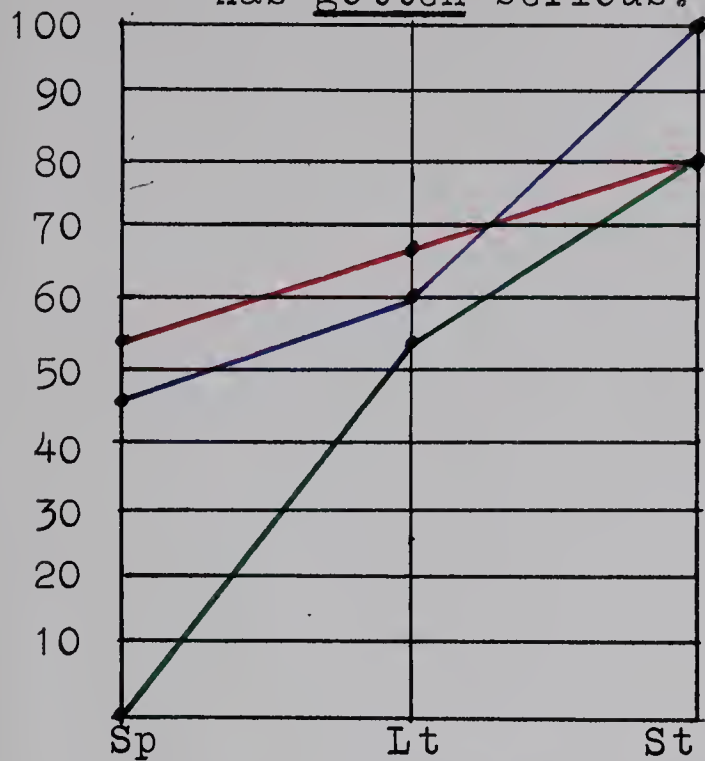
	<u>Sp</u>	<u>Lt</u>	<u>St</u>
Business	1	12	14
University	0	13	13
English	3	13	12
	(9%)	(84%)	(87%)
Mean :	(60%)		





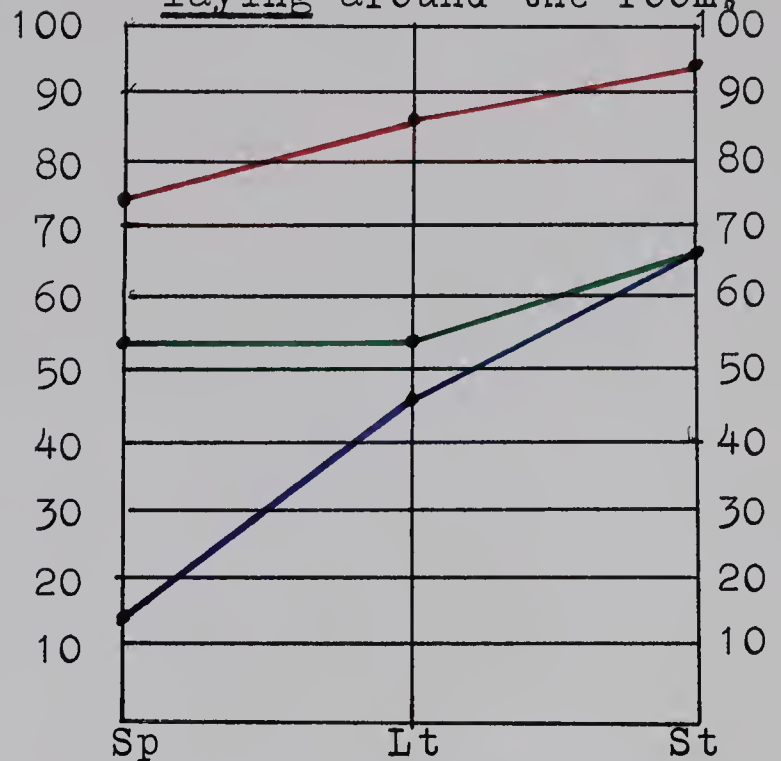


37) The loss of power has gotten serious.



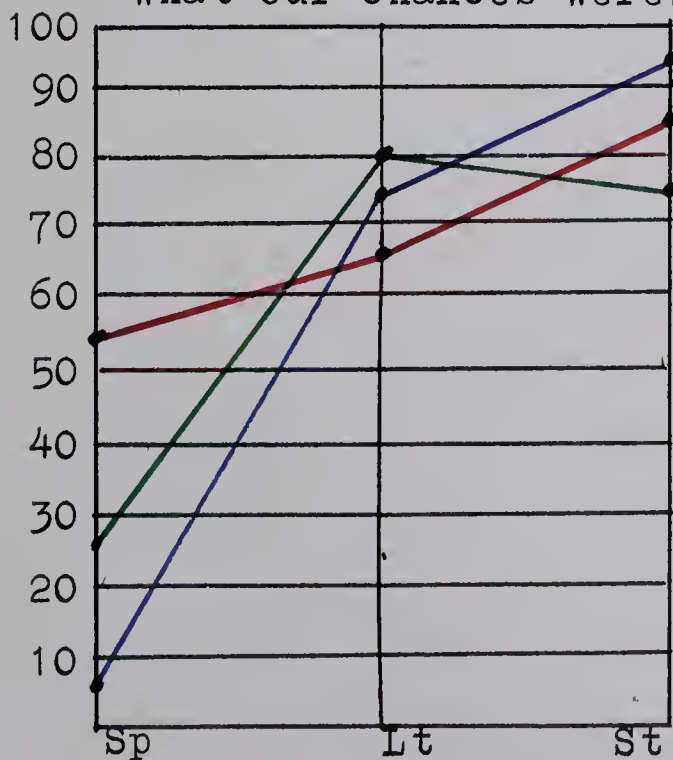
	Sp	Lt	St
Business	7	9	15
University	0	8	12
English	8	10	12
	(33%)	(60%)	(87%)
Mean :	(60%)		

38) The baby's toys were laying around the room.



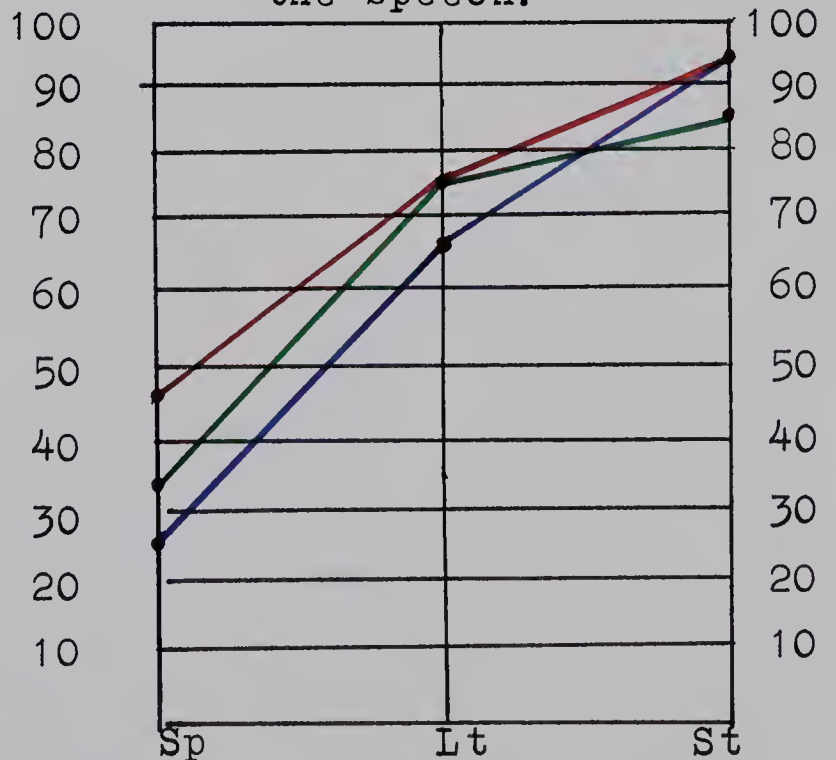
	Sp	Lt	St
Business	2	7	10
University	8	8	10
English	11	13	14
	(47%)	(62%)	(76%)
Mean :	(62%)		

39) I knew better than her what our chances were.



	Sp	Lt	St
Business	1	11	14
University	4	12	11
English	8	10	13
	(29%)	(73%)	(84%)
Mean :	(62%)		

40) Was it him who made the speech?



	Sp	Lt	St
Business	3	10	14
University	5	11	13
English	7	11	14
	(33%)	(71%)	(91%)
Mean :	(65%)		





**B29877**